

HYPER-CALVINISM AND JOHN GILL

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TO MY PARENTS

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PREFACE

Throughout the writing of this thesis, I have often been asked why I chose this particular field of theology to research. I have often wondered why myself, especially during the long months of reading old books which overlapped more than a little in their content, the reading of which was often quite tedious. And yet there have been many times when a certain book has gripped me in a new and enlightening way, answering in an instant a question with which I had been wrestling for months or even years. It has been moments such as these that have reminded me of the original purpose which set me out on what became a seemingly endless saga.

The immediate aim of this work will be seen to be the definition of what has come to be known as Hyper-Calvinism. That, however, has not been the ultimate end of my own research. Like so many others who have been brought to taste the glorious grace of God, I was much perplexed at the beginning of my Christian life about the various doctrines often associated with 'Calvinism'. What importance these doctrines have in Scripture is shown in the multitude of Biblical references that could be amassed concerning election, grace and other topics. Nevertheless, this young student found himself tossed to and fro by many interpretations of the relevant issues, and I found myself determined to find out exactly what the Scriptures themselves teach.

Being tossed to and fro meant learning to formulate my theology entirely from Scripture. But one could not ignore the many fine works of those who have also dealt with these subjects, and I discovered that there were mines of gold to be found in some of the old books of the Reformers, the Puritans and others. My pilgrimage would find me asking questions of Paul and John and Moses, and sitting in the schoolroom of faith beside the likes of Calvin, Owen and Gill. Slowly things began to take shape. But as old questions were answered, new ones arose.

Researching the theological development of Calvinism from the lower to the higher strains gave me the liberty to pick and choose which one was most Biblical - if indeed any. In the end, my own theology on the doctrines covered is quite eclectic. In one sense it could be construed as Calvinistic, but one would find himself hard pressed to classify it

in any one of the accepted categories of Reformed thought. Perhaps this is the way it should be. I have often noticed that many of the theologies covered in this thesis have become stagnant and scholastic when they are bent on fitting everything into a logical system which soon becomes a tradition which must be defended at all costs.

On the other hand, having arrived at answers to most of the questions that I had at the outset of this project, I have sought to apply them to other questions and to the practical issues of Christian life. Firmly holding to the essential tenets of Biblical orthodoxy, I have learned valuable lessons about defending fundamental truth at all costs while granting liberty to those who differ on secondary issues. And this thesis covers many of the most debated issues of both kinds.

As much as this has been an opportunity to formulate my own personal theology on the doctrines covered herein, however, I have followed the advice of my supervisors and kept my own views in the background so as to present an historical-theological investigation of the sources as free from personal comment as possible. It will readily be seen that the present work basically presents the views of the Hyper-Calvinists themselves, with full documentation and interaction with the secondary sources. Having dealt with several of these prolific authors for so long and at such depth I feel that I have come to know them personally. More importantly, though I have often disagreed with them on specific points, I am grateful that their love for the Saviour has helped me personally come to know the Lord Jesus deeper and deeper.

Several acknowledgements are in order at this time. Thanks are due to the three supervisors who advised me through my work. Professor James B. Torrance was the first, and though he counselled me for only a short time before his assuming the Chair of Systematic Theology at Aberdeen University, his comments and encouragement were most welcomed at the outset. Dr. Alisdair I.C. Heron was the overseer of the bulk of my work and it is to him that most thanks are due for advice. How well I remember him saying on many occasions, "Document it, document it". The necessity for precision and proof has been the greatest lesson he taught me relevant to writing theology. Thirdly, I wish to express gratitude to Dr. Alan Lewis for supervision of the work in the final stages.

Many thanks are also due to the staff of New College Library, Edinburgh, especially Mr. Iain Hope, who over the years has had to lug up from the dusty archives many an old and bulky tome for the author. I am also indebted to the fine staff and incomparable facilities of the British Museum Library, who always displayed the utmost mastery of library science and helpfulness to me during many long months spent in the Reading Room. I am also grateful to the staff of the Evangelical Library, London, for advice, the loan of rare volumes, and welcome cups of tea on cold Winter afternoons.

Personal gratitude is also expressed to Mr. Allen Tribe, former secretary of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, for his aid in deciphering the Church Record Book; and to Pastor Peter Masters for permission to consult the same. I am also indebted to Mr. B.A. Ramsbottom, editor of The Gospel Standard, for several helpful discussions and the loan of rare books. Dr. R.T. Kendall also provided numerous enlightening sessions of theological discussion, and both his scholarship and friendship are appreciated. For the loan, purchase and gifts of many volumes I am indebted to Dr. David Lachman, a near and dear brother in the Lord who has shared lengthy theological discussions with the author on dozens of occasions, often in unusual locations or circumstances.

I am indebted to my typist, Mrs. Jenny Maisels, and my proof-reader, Nick Needham, for help in an arduous task of meticulous detail and elephantine proportions. Special thanks belongs to the members of Bellevue Baptist Church, Edinburgh – especially Pastor Douglas Whyte and Mr. Humphrey Mildred – for opening their hearts and homes to a foreign brother. I am particularly grateful for their prayer support and love during periods of illness. May the Lord recompense them and all others mentioned above, as well as the many others who have assisted in various ways.

Finally, I must thank my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Guy S. Daniel, for encouragement, prayer, financial help, personal advice, and most of all their love for a son engaged in theological research on the other side of the world for nearly seven years. This work is dedicated to them.

In presenting this thesis, I hereby affirm that the entire composition

of the contents are my own work and responsibility, conducted under the guidance of the afore-mentioned supervisors, according to Regulation 2.4.15 of the Edinburgh University Postgraduate Study Programme.

Curt Daniel
March, 1983

SUMMARY

Since the Reformation, there have arisen several varieties of theology associated with John Calvin. One of the most extreme has come to be known as Hyper-Calvinism, but scholars have not been agreed as to what exactly constitutes this school. By a thorough examination of the works of those usually cited as Hyper-Calvinists in the context of the on-going progress of Calvinism in general, a definite pattern can be detected and through an investigation of the pertinent doctrines a definition of the term 'Hyper-Calvinism' can be attained.

Foremost of these writers was Dr. John Gill, an eighteenth century Particular Baptist pastor. The vital theme of Dr. Gill's theology was the sovereignty of divine grace, which gave rise to emphasizing divine sovereignty to the extent that human responsibility was minimised. This is seen especially in the sphere of salvation, which springs from the eternal double-decree of the secret will of God in its superiority over the temporal call of the Gospel. The theology of an essentially impassionate God led to a Supralapsarianism which tended to push back as much as possible into eternity in such a way that the division of election and reprobation governs the relationship between Law and Gospel, producing a strictly limited atonement and restrictions on the Gospel which cannot be found in Calvin's theology. Specifically this means that the most tangible tenet of Hyper-Calvinism has been the rejection of the theology of the Free Offer (with special reference to the word 'offer'), Duty-Faith (that saving faith in Christ is required by the Moral Law of all who hear the Gospel), and indiscriminate invitations to redemptive privileges and responsibilities.

Arising mainly out of the Supralapsarianism and doctrinal Antinomianism of Puritan England, the theology properly began in 1707 but has continued until the present in several varieties. Though there have been peripheral disputes amongst representatives of the various branches and continual controversies with other theologies, the essentials of Hyper-Calvinism have remained the same. Though a few adherents of this theology have come to reject its distinctive points, only time will tell whether the tendency of the movement will reverse itself and return to the balance as pictured by John Calvin.

ABBREVIATIONS

In many cases we have referred to writers only by their last names, except for authors sharing the same name (e.g., there are several named Edwards and Reed). As for the titles of the works cited, we have usually given them by citing the key word(s) in the title. In a few instances we have cited only the author's name without specifying which work of several is used; those familiar with the sources will recognize which work is being used.

<u>BQ</u>	<u>Baptist Quarterly</u>
<u>CAE</u>	Tobias Crisp, <u>Christ Alone Exalted</u> . Two volumes. Notes by John Gill. We have used the 1832 edition, which is most accessible and definitive.
Colligan	J. Hay Colligan, <u>Eighteenth Century Nonconformity</u> .
<u>Comm</u>	<u>Commentary</u> . In most cases this refers to Gill's <u>Exposition</u> , but a few times we have referred to the <u>Commentary</u> of Calvin.
<u>DJ</u>	John Gill, <u>The Doctrine of Justification</u> .
<u>DNB</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Bibliography</u> .
<u>EJ</u>	John Brine, <u>A Defence of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification</u> .
<u>HC</u>	Peter Toon, <u>The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity, 1689-1765</u> .
Harrison	Graham Harrison, <u>Dr. John Gill and His Teaching</u> .
Kendall	R.T. Kendall, <u>Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649</u> .
Kirkby	A.H. Kirkby, <u>The Theology of Andrew Fuller and Its Relation to Calvinism</u> .
Manley	K.C. Manley, <u>John Rippon, D.D. (1751-1836) and the Particular Baptists</u> .
Morison	James Morison, <u>The Extent of the Propitiation (Atonement)</u> .
<u>OED</u>	<u>Oxford English Dictionary</u> .
<u>PB</u>	Olin Robison, <u>The Particular Baptists in England</u> . (Occasionally 'Robison').
<u>PC</u>	Peter Toon, <u>Puritans and Calvinism</u> .

- Reed E.A. Reed, A Historical Study of Three Baptist Doctrines of the Atonement as Seen in the Writings of John Smyth and Thomas Hewlys, John Gill, and Andrew Fuller.
- Rippon John Rippon, A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late Reverend John Gill, D.D. Reprinted in Gill's Exposition of the Old Testament, vol.1.
- Saltmarsh John Saltmarsh, Free Grace.
- S & T¹ John Gill, Sermons and Tracts. First edition (1773), two/three volumes.
- S & T² John Gill, Sermons and Tracts. Second edition (1814), three volumes.
- TK Herman Hoeksema, The Triple Knowledge. Three volumes.
- Works Collected Works (in some cases, writings) of many writers: Gadsby, Huntington, Hawker, Owen, Baxter, et al. We have referred to differing editions of only a few writers (e.g. Toplady and Edwards).

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. CALVINISM BEFORE 1690

If the Reformation began with Luther's posting his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Wittenberg Schlosskirche on 31 October 1517, Calvinism may be reckoned to have begun in March 1536 with the publication of the first edition of Calvin's Institutes. It was immediately acclaimed to be a standard theological textbook, and it was just as early that many Reformers began to side with either Luther or Calvin on those points where the Institutes differed from the Augsburg Confession or Luther's writings. The differences between these two leaders were minor in comparison with their common differences with the Church of Rome, yet their distinctives were apparent. As time passed these two branches would produce other sub-branches along with doctrinal and geographic lines, creating a network of interlocking theological systems and ecclesiastical traditions.

As Lutheranism spread through the Germanic and Scandinavian regions, Calvinism found more of its influence in Switzerland, France, Holland and Britain. Further dissimilarities arose in time as the fine points were debated by Melancthon^h, Bucer and Hyperius on the one hand, and Bullinger, Beza, Martyr^A, Zanchius and Ursinus on the other. Whether, in fact, Calvin's successors "added much to what Calvin had originally written" (Toon)¹ is not the immediate issue of this thesis. Rather, the nature of a certain branch of Calvinism is investigated in the light of its contemporary theological environment. But since Hyper-Calvinism, by its very name if for no other reason, is related to Calvin and previous Calvinists, comparisons must and will be made.

1. Peter Toon, HC, p.ii. This point is greatly debated on both sides, most recently by R.T. Kendall in Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649 and 'John Cotton - First English Calvinist?', (Westminster Conference Papers 1976, pp.38-50). See also Holmes Rolston III, John Calvin Versus the Westminster Confession; Basil Hall, 'Calvin vs. the Calvinists', in Duffield, John Calvin; J.B. Torrance, 'Covenant or Contract?' (SJT, vol.23, pp.51-76); Alan Sell, The Great Debate; William H. Chalker, Calvin and Some Seventeenth Century English Calvinists.

Knox brought Calvinism to Scotland, where the debate took on new political ramifications; Beza's influence was felt greatly in Holland and then in England, especially through William Perkins and William Ames. It is possible that, because Knox personally studied under Calvin, Scottish Calvinism took a slightly different form from English Calvinism.² However, one must remember that all of these men were notable writers in their own right, none of them merely parroting Calvin's words and all of them making important contributions to theology.

English Calvinism of this period has usually been called Puritan Calvinism. Dutch Calvinism reached its peak of popularity at the Synod of Dort (1618-19), while English Calvinism found its widest acceptance at the time of the Westminster Assembly (1643-53). Several variant forms of Calvinism had recently been debated, including Amyraldianism (following Moyse Amyraut, John Cameron, David Blondel and Jean Daille) and, as it was so-called, Antinomianism. Amyraldianism was condemned by those in the Dort-Westminster camp mainly because it held to the doctrine of universal atonement and what has sometimes been called 'hypothetical universalism'. It would reappear in an altered form later in the theology of Richard Baxter. Actually, Calvinistic Antinomianism first arose in the American colonies in the controversy concerning Mrs. Anne Hutchinson, John Cotton and others in the 1630s. A parallel controversy soon arose in England with the teachings of Tobias Crisp, John Saltmarsh and others. There were also lesser Antinomian groups such as the Familists, Levellers and Ranters, but it was especially the teachings of Crisp and Saltmarsh that concerned the Westminster Assembly.³ This Antinomianism was never very popular but it too would find a new expression later.

Puritanism ended in 1640, 1660 or most probably 1689, depending

2. Much of what has been called Hyper-Calvinism in Scotland has in fact been what we call High Calvinism. Hyper-Calvinism is almost entirely an English phenomena in Britain. Candlish has an interesting comment: "In England, Calvinism has much more frequently lapsed into Antinomianism than in Scotland; whereas in Scotland, Arminianism has always run more immediately into Pelagianism than in England; for these are evidently the opposite tendencies of the two systems - Calvinism inclining towards Antinomian fatalism, and Arminianism towards Pelagian self-righteousness or self-conversion" (Extent of the Atonement, p.132).

3. The Westminster Assembly had proposed to burn the first edition of Crisp's Christ Alone Exalted, according to R.I. Jones, Congregationalism in England, 1662-1962, p.115. Kendall suggests that this 'Antinomian threat' caused the Westminster Assembly to over-react and thus to seal the Beza-Perkins form of Calvinism in its Confession. Cf. Kendall, pp.184-196. On Antinomianism, see Chapter X below.

upon how one defines Puritanism. Some see it ending with the commencement of the Commonwealth, others with the Restoration or the Act of Toleration. In 1661 was held the Conference which produced the Savoy Declaration. It differed ~~from~~ the Westminster Standards only on minor points but it was notable for showing how that later Puritanism was being influenced more and more by Independents rather than by Presbyterians or Anglicans. Savoy also exhibits a greater emphasis on the doctrine of divine sovereignty and a lessening of some points of human responsibility, even as Westminster had done in comparison with previous standards.⁴

The Act of Toleration in 1689 allowed the Independents further liberty in developing English Calvinism.⁵ Most significant at this time was the Baptist Confession of 1689. Although Baptists had heretofore been predominantly Arminian,⁶ they found a sympathetic influence in Savoy's Congregational polity and were beginning to appear more formidable and respectable to other English Calvinists. Previously Anabaptists were generally considered unstable and a political threat, as most Presbyterians and Anglicans associated Anabaptism with the fanatical Munster uprising and the Baptist connection with the radical elements in Cromwell's New Model Army.⁷ But the 1689 Confession was a pivotal event in Baptist history. After this, few Baptists looked back to the Baptist Confession of 1644, which had been something of a rival to Westminster's Calvinism. It is easily seen that the 1689 Confession differs from Westminster only in points concerning baptism, church polity and church-state relations. It was otherwise nearly a verbatim copy of the Westminster Confession. The alterations were mostly the work of Benjamin Keach, who was probably the most important Baptist figure of the later Puritan era, together with Bunyan and Knollys.

4. Cf. Toon, PC, pp.74-84. Sell basically accepts Toon's views (The Great Debate), but differs on certain particulars.

5. On the effect of the Act of Toleration of 1689 on the history of Nonconformity, see A.G. Cumberland, The Toleration Act of 1689 and Freedom for Protestant Nonconformists 1660-1830.

6. John Smyth (1554-1612), the first important English Baptist, rejected unconditional election, original sin, limited atonement and other Calvinist doctrines. Cf. W.T. Whitley, CE, p.16 and Edwin Allen Reed, A Historical Study of Three Baptist Doctrines of Atonement as Seen in the Writings of John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, John Gill and Andrew Fuller. For a discussion of Calvinism and Baptists, see Kenneth Good, Are Baptists Calvinists?

7. Cf. W.T. Whitley, A History of British Baptists, pp.73-81. See Chapter X below.

It is apparent that by 1690 English Calvinism was predominantly in the hands of Independents and Baptists. Anglican and Presbyterian Calvinists tended to become High Churchmen, Arminians, Arians, Deists or Socinians, while the Independent and Baptist Calvinists tended to become Hyper-Calvinists.

B. ENGLISH CALVINISM, 1690-1770

The 1690's saw the Independents and Presbyterians at odds yet again. This was but one effect of the Neonomian Controversy.¹ The controversy arose when one Richard Davis began teaching doctrines which were reminiscent of those of Tobias Crisp, whose works were reprinted at this time.² Davis, an Independent pastor in Rothwell, Northamptonshire, was actively involved in evangelism and church work in Nonconformist circles in Northamptonshire with repercussions arising in London. Davis was probably not the only one responsible for the controversy. The tension between Independents and Presbyterians had been apparent for some time and such a battle was inevitable.

The main issue was not church polity, though this was involved as the churches debated about measures of discipline. Rather, the main issues were the same as in the days of the Westminster Assembly: the nature of faith, the content of the Gospel, the use of the Law, the necessity of good works, and assurance of salvation. On the Neonomian side were Richard Baxter, Daniel Williams, William Lorimer, Vincent Alsop, John Humfrey, Samuel Clark, John Edwards and Bishop Edward Stillingfleet. On the other were Isaac Chauncey, Robert Traill, Thomas Goodwin, Jr., Thomas Cole, Stephen Lobb, Thomas Edwards and Benjamin Keach. Some others attempted an unsuccessful mediating line: John Howe, Thomas Beverley, Samuel Young, Jacobus Keyser and Herman Witsius. In the end, all persons involved clung more tenaciously to their positions. One result pertinent to our discussion was that Independents were drawn closer to their Baptist associates in the conflict, as Neonomians tended to be Presbyterian. In fact, after this it was not altogether unusual to find churches in which both Independents and Baptists were united in membership.

Davis was the center of the debate in Northamptonshire, so an inquiry was held at Kettering to judge whether his teachings were producing schism and practical Antinomianism. Davis refused to attend

1. It was called the Neonomian Controversy by those accused of Antinomianism, and the Antinomian Controversy by those accused of Neonomianism. Since 'Antinomian' is used to describe several other controversies as well, I have preferred to speak of the 1690's debate as the Neonomian Controversy. See Chapters VI and X.

2. On Davis and the Neonomian Controversy, see Thomas Coleman, Memorials, pp.54-70; Norman Glass, The Early History of the Independent Church at Rothwell; Giles Firmin, Panourgia: A Brief Review of Mr. Davis's Vindication; Toon, 'A Most Horrid and Dismal Plague'.

this 'Ketterin-Inquisition' and no formal censure came of it. Instead, the controversy moved to the London arena. But Northamptonshire was to see a new development.

Joseph Hussey was an Independent minister who left the Presbyterian church in the midst of the controversy.³ He also testified at the Ketterin-Inquisition and expressed views different from those of Davis.⁴ He was also very active in evangelism, as shown in his The Gospel Feast Opened, but as yet had not adopted a Crispian position as strongly as Davis. But within a decade he was to change considerably. He renounced his former evangelism and took a 'no offer' position in God's Operations of Grace but No Offers of Grace (1707) and incorporated certain Crispian views in his massive The Glory of Christ Unveiled (1706). By this time Davis had also turned 'no offer'. Thus the two definitive strains of Hyper-Calvinism merged: Crispianism and the 'no offer' line.

It may be noted that this occurred in Northamptonshire, which was near Cambridgeshire, which had for a long time been under the influence of Puritan Calvinism. Both Perkins and Ames had left their mark there. We shall see that this district and London would continue to be at the centre of the Hyper-Calvinist dispute throughout the eighteenth century.

Among Hussey's converts was John Skepp, who agreed with Hussey on all essential points at the time of his change.⁵ Eventually Skepp came to hold to the Baptist doctrine of baptism,⁶ being the first Baptist Hyper-Calvinist (Keach had held to 'offer' evangelism and therefore was not Hyper-Calvinist).⁷ Soon he was called to pastor the Baptist church

3. On Hussey see the following: Geoffrey Nuttall, 'Northamptonshire and the Modern Question: A Turning Point in Eighteenth-Century Dissent'; 'Cambridge Nonconformity 1660-1770'; and 'Calvinism in Free Church History'; A.G. Matthews, Diary of a Cambridge Minister; Walter Wilson, The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses in London, Westminster and Southwark, vol.IV, pp.416-422; Hussey's occasional reminiscences in his Glory (pp.6, 10, 46-47, 120-123, 303-306, 704-706, etc.); William Bentley, The Lord the Helper of His People, With the Last Dying Words of That Eminent Servant of Christ, Mr. Joseph Hussey; Toon, 'Joseph Hussey'; and HC, pp.70-85.

4. Toon, HC, pp.70-74; Richard Davis, Truth and Innocency Vindicated, pp.5ff; Glass, Early History, p.51.

5. A.G. Matthews, p.12; Graham Harrison, Dr. John Gill and His Teaching, p.21. For biographical information on Skepp, cf. Wilson, op.cit., vol.II, pp.572-574. On Hussey's commendatory opinions of 'Skep' (as he spelled it), see Matthews, Diary, p.12.

6. Matthews, Diary, p.12.

7. Seymour, p.55. See Chapter VIII.

in London formerly pastored by important Baptists such as Hanserd Knollys and Robert Steed.⁸ Skepp wrote only one book, and that was published posthumously, but his Divine Energy was to exert great influence on succeeding generations. He is known mainly through his influence on John Gill and John Brine.

The church back at Kettering had by this time split over the baptism question, and the Baptists separated and re-formed under the leadership of one William Wallis. Among Wallis's congregation were two young men who were to be the leaders in both Calvinistic and Baptist circles for some fifty years: John Gill and John Brine.⁹ Gill was converted before Brine and entered the ministry first. He accepted a call to Higham Ferrars near Kettering for a while before moving to London in 1719. At about the same time as Gill's first call, Brine was converted under Gill's preaching.¹⁰ Skepp ordained Gill in London and Gill always revered Skepp's memory, as when he reprinted Divine Energy. One cannot discuss Gill without discussing Brine, though the latter was far outshadowed by the former, as Brine himself admitted.¹¹ After Skepp's death Brine was called to his church and was ordained by Gill.

We see now a complicated network of associations forming. Gill succeeded Keach and his son-in-law Benjamin Stinton. Among Gill's deacons was Thomas Crosby, the famous Baptist historian, though the two later divided over the offer question. Gill reprinted (or wrote Prefaces for) the works of Crisp, Davis and Skepp. Gill both ordained and buried Brine, and probably was his closest friend.¹² Brine ordained John Collett Ryland, Sr., another friend of Gill and one who would later be influential through his sons and writings. The next generation continued in this network and further splits and associations resulted.

The Calvinistic Baptists came to be known as Particular Baptists to

8. John Skepp, Divine Energy, p.x; Wilson, vol.II, p.573.

9. For biographical information on Brine, see Wilson, vol.II, pp.574-583; and DNB. Brine was a prolific but repetitious author. His views are best summed up in two larger works: A Treatise on Various Subjects and A Vindication of Some Truths of Natural and Revealed Religion. Like Gill, Brine was more gifted than most Hypers to deal with the more scholarly issues.

10. John Rippon, A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late Reverend John Gill, D.D., p.lix; Harrison, p.21.

11. Brine, Remarks, p.10.

12. The funeral oration was published in S & T,¹ vol.I, pp.591-592.

differentiate them from General Baptists. Their influence in Britain in the first half of the eighteenth century was small because they numbered only some 20,000.¹³ By 1750 most General Baptists had turned Arian or Unitarian.¹⁴ As yet there was very little Baptist work in Scotland, but the religious temper there met with similar controversies, notably the Marrow Controversy and the Secession Church.

13. Harrison, p.27; Seymour, p.311. Other estimates are much lower, as John Ryland, Jr.'s estimate of 5,000 in 1753, in Seymour p.307; Joseph Ivimey, A History of the English Baptists, vol.III, p.279. But both figures are but estimates and include only actual members.

14. Henry C. Vedder, A Short History of the Baptists, p.167; Seymour, p.83.

C. JOHN GILL

Before the 1720's, Hyper-Calvinism was unorganized and without any accepted leader. Davis, Hussey and Skepp were the most important of the period from 1690 to 1720, but were popular only in a small circle and wrote relatively little. Hussey would have been accepted as leader if it were not for his awkward literary style and some dubious Christological views, which will be discussed later. Hyper-Calvinism found its cohesion in John Gill. It must be noted, however, that though most eighteenth century Hyper-Calvinists were Particular Baptists, others were to be found among Independents and Presbyterians; nor were all Calvinists (of whatever camp) Hyper-Calvinist; neither were all Particular Baptists Hyperist.

It is regularly recognized that Gill was the leader.¹ His influence was greatest among Baptists,² with whom he proudly associated himself.³ This was recognized in his own lifetime⁴ and his influence still continues.⁵ This recognition was not necessarily due to his succeeding Stinton and Keach; it was gained with the publication of his Cause of God and Truth and continued to grow throughout his lifetime. Receiving a Doctorate of Divinity in 1748 gave greater impetus to this popularity, and afterwards he was regularly referred to as the authoritative Doctor

1. Wilson, vol.IV, p.221; Robison, Legacy, pp.112, 116; PB, pp.ii, iv; Seymour, pp.27, 307; Manley, Making, p.254; Rippon, p.i; D. Mervyn Himbury, British Baptists: A Short History, p.66; E.F. Clipsham, 'Andrew Fuller and Fullerism: A Study in Evangelical Calvinism', BQ, vol.20, p.101; C.H. Spurgeon, in Thornton, The Soteriology of C.H. Spurgeon, p.215, and in Colquitt, The Soteriology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, p.131; Clark, History, vol.II, p.251; Engelsma, p.11; Laws, Andrew Fuller, p.40. Gill's stature with later Hyper-Calvinists is unsurpassed. See e.g., John Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.I, p.372; Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, pp.69, 97, 299-303; Hawker, Letter, p.5; Works, vol.IX, p.441; Stevens, Pastoral Letter, pp.18-20; Palmer, Free Enquiry, p.20; Burn, Question, p.26; Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.61-62; Hassell, History, pp.258, 653; Styles, Manual, p.33; Guide, p.48; Bradbury, Pulpit, vol.IV, p.195.

2. Seymour (pp.294, 307, 313) incorrectly says that Gill's influence was almost entirely among Particular Baptists. But Gill was quite popular with Calvinistic Independents, some General Baptists, and others (see Rippon, p.xix). Manley (Rippon, p.i) thinks that estimates of Gill's influence among Baptists has been exaggerated.

3. Gill, S & T,¹ vol.II, p.108.

4. It was sometimes said in his time, "'Tis safe to believe anything, if Mr. Gill believes it" (Brine, Motives, p.3).

5. Contra Seymour, p.314.

John Gill or simply as 'the Doctor'.⁶ At that time highly educated Non-conformist ministers were rare and often considered carnal,⁷ but Gill became the exception. It may even be said that his popularity was too great since other ministers tended to confine their serious study to Gill's writings.⁸ Thus the London minister was looked to by the rural ministers for guidance,⁹ over whom he presided as something of a Baptist Archbishop.¹⁰ It has rightly been suggested that if Gill had moderated his theology the history of English Baptist theology and polity would have been greatly altered.¹¹

On the other hand, not all Particular Baptists agreed with Gill, as on the 'offer' question. Yet none could ignore him.¹² At that time he was certainly the most prolific Baptist theological writer, and his Body of Divinity was the standard Baptist theological textbook until the appearance of A.H. Strong's Systematic Theology over a hundred years later. Though a Baptist he considered himself firmly within the Puritan tradition, as is seen in the sources he quotes.¹³

Gill wrote more than any previous Baptist and more than any of his contemporary Calvinists. Some called him 'Dr. Voluminous'¹⁴ and, like Hussey, he wrote 'Folios to knock Quartos o' the head'.¹⁵ Seymour,

6. E.g., Huntington, Works, vol.XV, pp.54, 60; John Martin, Life, p.44; Hemington, Remarks, p.9; Palmer, Free Enquiry, p.20; John Stevens, Pastoral Letter, p.29; Help to Zion's Travellers, vol.I, p.118; Display, pp.143, 163, etc.; Rippon, p.xxxiii; William Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.123, 133, 203, 311; Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, pp.77, 83; Eternal Sonship, p.79 (cf. pp.82, 87); Warburton, Mercies, p.175 (cf. pp.176-177); Button, pp.28, 71. Such a compliment was and is popular with this school even when referring to those who certainly had not earned doctor's degrees (cf. Warburton, Mercies, p.175). But cf. Huntington's 'S.S.' (see Chapter X) and Dell's strong condemnation of degrees (Works, pp.492, 552-577).

7. Manley, Making, p.362.

8. Cf. John Fawcett, quoted in Robison, Legacy, p.112. On the other hand, the nineteenth-century opponent of Hyper-Calvinism, Robert Aikman, said that Hyper-Calvinists esteem Gill but "of the substance of his voluminous works they know absolutely nothing: yet find it exceedingly convenient in their doctrinal bickerings to make mention at random of his name" (Judgement, p.77).

9. Robison, Legacy, p.113.

10. Seymour, p.307.

11. Robison, Legacy, p.113.

12. "People were seldom indifferent to Gill. They either liked him very much or they did not like him at all" (Seymour, p.284).

13. Robison, Legacy, p.113; Harrison, p.12. See Chapter II.

14. David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World, p.168.

15. Preface to Hussey, Glory. Technically, Hussey was incorrect to describe his works as folios. His largest (Glory of Christ) was a large quarto. Some of Gill's works can be described as folios but most were quarto or octavo.

however, is incorrect to assert that "Gill distinguished himself more for the quantity of his writing than he did for the quality of it",¹⁶ for Gill's huge Commentary was the work of an able philologist, classicist and historian. Moreover, his Body of Divinity has been praised ever since it was penned. For sheer bulk Gill exceeds all other Hyper-Calvinists in output, while Baxter is probably the only one who wrote more in the Puritan era.

Because, then, of Gill's influence at the time of an important period in the history of English Calvinism, this thesis investigates and analyzes Gill's distinctive theology. Not all areas of his theology are considered since he wrote on many subjects.¹⁷ The definitive doctrines of Hyper-Calvinism receive prominence in his writings.¹⁸ Thus this thesis is a case-study in historical theology. Other writers are touched on mainly in the context of the definitive Hyper-Calvinist himself. In studying the relevant doctrines in Gill's writings we aim to reach a workable definition of Hyper-Calvinism itself. The study, then, is basically theological, but a brief biography is in order at the start.¹⁹

John Gill was born in 1697 to Nonconformist parents. Converted in 1716 he was baptised soon thereafter and began preaching. After serving a brief pastorate at Higham Ferrars he was called to the Particular Baptist Church in Horsleydown, London, formerly pastored by Keach.²⁰

16. Seymour, p.285.

17. Even Seymour accepts that this approach is in order: "...there is such a vast amount of material from Gill's pen that other students may desire to consider certain facets of his thought in further detail" (Seymour, p.iii). Cf. Geoffrey Williams' comments in his appendix to John Warburton, Mercies of a Covenant God, p.247.

18. A.H. Kirkby, The Theology of Andrew Fuller and Its Relation to Calvinism, p.37.

19. Most biographical information on Gill is gleaned from Gill's pastoral successor, John Rippon (Memoir of Gill). A fuller biography is needed (B.R. White, 'John Gill in London', BQ, vol.22, p.72). Other brief biographies include: Wilson, vol.IV, pp.212-224; White, op.cit., pp.72-91; Harrison, op.cit.; Toon, HC, pp.96-100; Stennett, The Victorious Christian Receiving His Crown; (Anonymous), A Vindication of the Reverend Mr. John Gill; Thomas Craner, A Grain of Gratitude; Middleton, Biographia Evangelica, vol.IV, pp.448-466; and sections in DNB, Iveney, and Baptist histories. Unlike Gadsby and Huntington, Gill rarely mentions himself in his writings. Unlike Warburton, Kershaw et al, he wrote no autobiography.

20. The term 'Particular Baptist' was used as early as 1714 by Stinton and probably in 1689 by Keach. It is similar, but not identical, to 'Strict Baptist', which refers primarily to polity concerning the prerequisite of Believer's Baptism and church membership for admission to the Lord's Supper. See Chapter V. Gill was probably 'Strict' (as W.G. McLoughlin, vol.I, p.305). For biographical information on Keach, see especially W.E. Spears, The Baptist Movement in England in the Late Seventeenth Century as Reflected in the Work and Thought of Benjamin Keach, 1640-1704.

Though ordained by John Skepp,²¹ Gill always considered his former pastor William Wallis to be his 'spiritual father'.²² There was some confusion and disagreement over Gill's call to the church, finally resulting in a church split within a few years.²³ (The church split between Gill and the Keach-Stinton-Crosby family.) A new tradition arose in the church and Gill would make only rare references to Keach in his writings,²⁴ though the influence is apparent. Such splits could occur more easily in the Baptist congregational polity than if the church had been Presbyterian,²⁵ but, as we shall see later, they reveal a polity of discipline which has important implications for practical Antinomianism.

Gill viewed himself as continuing in the Puritan tradition (except on baptism) and deplored the state of Reformed churches in his time. "They must be sharply reproved for; and particularly their coldness and deadness, formality and hypocrisy in religious worship."²⁶ This censure is especially applied to Reformed ministers,²⁷ though this estimation has been applied almost verbatim to Gill himself by others.

Gill considered himself more a writer than a pastor.²⁸ He was continually in one or more controversies.²⁹ the main ones include the following opponents: Daniel Whitby (Arminianism),³⁰ Matthias Maurice (baptism),³¹ Anthony Collins (literal interpretation of

21. On the ordination, cf. Rippon, p.xiii; Iveney, vol.III, pp.433-434.

22. Harrison, p.4.

23. Cf. Seymour, pp.38-45; White, 'John Gill in London', pp.84-88; 'Thomas Crosby, Baptist Historian'; Payne, 'Abraham Atkins and General Communion', pp.314-319.

24. See Chapter II.

25. On Gill's congregational polity, see especially Body, pp.858-859.

26. Comm on Isa.58:1. Cf. Comm on Rev.3:1-4, 11:1, 11:8.

27. Comm on Ezek. 44:7, 10; Hosea 7:9; Isa. 57:17; Cause, p.53.

28. Gill disdained frequent pastoral visitation, as he admitted in his sermon, The Duty of a Pastor, (S & T, vol.II, p.5.) The often-quoted phrase, 'as surely as Dr. Gill is in his study' is first recorded in Craner, A Grain of Gratitude, p.36.

29. Wilson, vol.IV, pp.217-219. One of Fuller's biographers, Gilbert Laws felt that "Although a doughty defender of his principles, Gill found no pleasure in attacking others" (Fuller, p.40).

30. Gill answered Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points (1710) with The Cause of God and Truth (1735). Cf. Rippon, pp.xxiv-xxvii. This was his most important controversy and his most popular book.

31. Cf. Maurice, Monuments of Mercy; Gill, The Ancient Mode of Baptism by Immersion and A Defence of the Ancient Mode of Baptism by Immersion; Rippon, p.xvii. See Chapter V for Baptism. Maurice apparently wavered between High and Hyper-Calvinism.

prophecy),³² Abraham Taylor (Antinomianism and justification),³³ Samuel Bourne (Supralapsarianism),³⁴ Samuel Chandler (Deism),³⁵ John Wesley (Arminianism and perseverance),³⁶ plus numerous lesser battles over baptism,³⁷ Trinitarianism,³⁸ patristics,³⁹ and the reprinting of Crisp's works with apologetic annotations.⁴⁰ It is interesting that it was Brine, not Gill, who specifically published on the issue most pertinent to the Hyper-Calvinist dispute: the Modern Question (that is, whether it is the duty of non-Christians to believe in Christ unto salvation). Brine's treatment, though, was rather rhetorical compared with the discussion Gill allots to it in various places in his writings. And Gill gives us more material, though no specific treatise as such.

Gill published much more than any other Hyper-Calvinist before or since. His exposition of the Song of Solomon was the first to attract popularity, followed shortly by several short tracts. But it was his Cause of God and Truth (1738) that established him as the leading writer of that persuasion and all of Gill's distinctive beliefs are to be found in it. It is quite possible, though unproveable, that this success in youth fostered in him an even stronger determination to adhere to those distinctive beliefs and that he could only with great difficulty reverse his earlier theological tendencies. This success was followed by more tracts and sermons, most of which were collected in two editions

32. Cf. Collins, The Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered (1726) and A Discourse of the Grounds of the Christian Religion (1724). Gill, The Prophecies of the Old Testament, Respecting the Messiah, etc. (1728); Rippon, p.xix.

33. Cf. Rippon, pp.xx-xxiii. Brine considered Taylor a Baxterian. (Brine, Refutation of Arminian Principles, p.12.) See Chapters VI and X.

34. Bourne wrote anonymously as 'A Consistent Christian', A Dialogue Between a Baptist and a Churchman (1737, 1739). Cf. Rippon, p.xxix. See Chapter IV.

35. Cf. Rippon, p.xxix.

36. Cf. Rippon, pp.xxxiii-xxxiv. See Chapters II and VIII.

37. Cf. Rippon, p.xvii, xxxiii-xxxiv, xxxix-xl, xlix-li.

38. Cf. Rippon, pp.xlii-xliv. See Chapter V.

39. Cf. Rippon, p.xxv. This arose from Heywood's accusing Gill of misquoting or mistranslating certain Fathers in Part IV of The Cause of God and Truth. See Chapter II.

40. Cf. Rippon, pp.xxxiv-xxxvii. This parallels the controversy surrounding Thomas Boston's reprinting and annotating The Marrow of Modern Divinity in the 1720's, as both works came from the 1640's and centred on the Antinomian question. On the Marrow Controversy, see especially Lachman, The Marrow Controversy. We will mention the Marrow often in our work.

of Sermons and Tracts (1773 and 1814, both in three volumes).⁴¹ There was also a curious work on the Hebrew vowel points which attracted a little attention at the time. His magnum opus was his huge Commentary (1746-63) on the whole Bible, for which he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Divinity by Marischal College, Aberdeen. His last major work was his Body of Divinity (1769-70) including both doctrinal and practical divinity. It is regrettable that we do not have any of Gill's letters or journals, for they would doubtlessly shed further light on Gill the person. He left only one hymn and no poetry except the poem exchanged with Wesley in debate.⁴²

Gill's closest friends were John Brine, John Collett Ryland, Sr., and A.M. Toplady.⁴³ Undoubtedly he had other friends among Particular Baptist and Independent ministers, such as those with whom he shared the lectureship at the Lime Street Lectures. He was also interested in the Bristol Academy (before it became involved in the Evangelical Awakening⁴⁴) and in the new Baptist university in America, Brown University, to which he donated a complete set of his writings.⁴⁵

Gill pastored a congregation of above a thousand at the beginning of his ministry, but this number dwindled considerably by the end of his life. Much can be learned about the church's life from the Church Record Book which Gill kept in his own hand for above fifty years. (Fortunately this manuscript is still in the possession of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London and has recently been transcribed from difficult handwriting into type by the church secretary, Mr. Allen Tribe.) His wife and one of his daughters died before him and nothing

41. All published bibliographies list the 1773 (First) edition as containing only two volumes, but there was an extremely rare third volume containing The Doctrine of the Trinity and The Doctrine of Justification and others found in the 1814 (Second) edition. The Evangelical Library, London, owns such a copy. Because all the material in Vol.III is found elsewhere, we will refer to the other edition or individual printings.

42. The hymn is found in S & T', vol.I, pp.xii-xiii and in Seymour, p.33. The poem is in Seymour, pp.327-330.

43. Seymour (p.282) overlooks Brine, whom he knew from youth and throughout his life. Cf. Toon, HC, p.101, and Gill, S & T', vol.I, pp.591-592. Toplady, it must be recalled, was only 30 when Gill died.

44. Rippon, p.lv. Cf. Chapter VIII.

45. R.A. Guild, History of Brown University, pp.66, 158, 336. Brown University later bestowed an honorary D.D. upon J.C. Ryland, Jr. (Culross, Rylands, p.83).

is known of any subsequent generations today.⁴⁷ John Gill died in 1771 and was buried in Bunhill Fields, London, the resting place of a host of other important Nonconformist divines, including Bunyan, Owen, Goodwin, Brine, Knollys, Rippon, Williams, Watts, Ridgeley, as well as a few other Hyper-Calvinists, such as Wilks, Skepp, Button and Stevens.

47. Gill had a nephew of the same name who achieved moderate success in the ministry. See Urwick, Nonconformity in Herts, pp.221-225. There were also a few other ministers named John Gill at this time (cf. ibid., pp.673, 687, 701).

D. FURTHER HYPER-CALVINISM IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Several factors contributed to the change within the ranks of Particular Baptists in the second half of the eighteenth century. It must first be noted that there were several prominent Calvinists who stood more directly in the tradition of the Reformation, of whom Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge were the two most important. Both had done much work in non-Particular concerns, but their effect on Particular Baptists was minimal during their lifetimes because they were Independents.¹ Yet they were well respected by many, especially among those who were to become involved in the Evangelical Awakening. It could well be argued that they were 'holding the fort' until the Awakening arrived, and when it arrived they gave their support to it till they saw God transfer their mantle to a new generation. (Watts, however, was slow in approving the Awakening.)

There was exceptionally little Particular Baptist involvement in the Awakening. A few General Baptists and Independents cooperated but the Awakening occurred mainly within Anglicanism. Nevertheless, the Awakening certainly had a crucial place in the delivery of Particular Baptists from the dominance of Hyper-Calvinism.² One would expect that the delivery would come through Whitefield³ or the other British leaders who were Reformed, but in fact it was the American Jonathan Edwards who played the initial role. Edwards affected John Rippon and Andrew Fuller, who in turn were the leaders of the movement towards Moderate Calvinism among English Baptists.⁴

1. Rippon, however, reprinted some of Watt's sermons, but seems to have ignored Doddridge. Robison (Legacy, p.123) and Nuttall ('Calvinism in Free Church History', p.426) suggest that Doddridge's recommendations for missions in 1747 started the shift in Nonconformity. Doddridge, oddly, seemed ignorant of Gill, referring to him as "one John Giles, or Gill" who wrote on baptism in 1726 (Doddridge, Correspondence, vol.2, p.240). This is not a mistaken reference to the John Gilles who worked with Whitefield. Doddridge had supported Maurice and Taylor in various disputes (Nuttall, 'Northamptonshire', pp.118-119).

2. Some deny that the Hyper-Calvinism of eighteenth-century Particular Baptists ever declined; such as Kenneth Dix, 'Particular Baptists and Strict Baptists: An Historical Survey', Annual Report and Bulletin of the Strict Baptist Historical Society, number 13, p.4. To some extent this is true, given the rise of the Gospel Standard Baptists. But before Fuller, Particular Baptists were almost unanimous in their Hyper-Calvinism.

3. So Thornton, pp.95-96.

4. On the eclipse of Hyper-Calvinism by evangelical Calvinism in this period, see W.R. Ward, 'The Baptists and the Transformation of the Church, 1780-1830', BQ, vol.25, pp.167-184. On Edward's special contribution, see Manley, Rippon, pp.35, 45, 265; D.E. Edwards, The Influence of Jonathan Edwards on the Religious Life of Britain in the XVIIIth Century and the First Half of the XIXth Century; Clipsham, 'Fuller and Fullerism', pp.110-113. See further on this issue in Chapter VIII.

The works on Edwards were being read at the Bristol Academy and through it by a number of influential ministers. That Edwards co-operated with Arminians (even though only a very few) in the American Great Awakening was enough for the Hyper-Calvinists to anathematize him as they had Whitefield. Yet Edwards was more scholarly and more emphatically Reformed than Whitefield and therefore came to be studied by some within the Particular Baptist tradition. Possibly the first one affected was John Ryland, Jr.,⁵ son of John Collett Ryland, Sr.,⁶ though he was probably converted from Hyper-Calvinism after reading Fuller. The younger Ryland and Robert Hall⁷ made significant contributions but it was Fuller and Rippon who were the leaders on the theological front.

John Rippon was Gill's successor in the London Church.⁸ There were some at the church who disagreed with Rippon's growing Moderate Calvinism, and these left the church soon after and formed a new church under William Button,⁹ who later was one of Fuller's strongest opponents. At first Rippon continued in Gill's tradition. He used Gill's 'Statement of Faith'¹⁰ but signs of departure were apparent when he reprinted Keach's Catechism.¹¹ (It must be recalled that Keach was not a full Hyper-Calvinist and that Gill had separated from the Keach-Stinton-Crosby tradition at the beginning of his ministry.) Rippon, then, seemed to be the first hint of departure. He was ordained by Benjamin Wallin, Samuel Stennett (both were close friends of Gill), Abraham

5. D.E. Edwards, pp.206, 212; Manley, Rippon, pp.35, 45.

6. Much confusion has arisen from the similarity of the names of father and son. The father (Sr.), a close friend of Gill's, named his two sons John Ryland, Jr., and Herman Witsius Ryland. Ryland, Jr., in turn named his son Jonathan Edwards Ryland. This is a curious display of the change that was taking place within a family and a tradition. The senior John Ryland (1723-1792) died right when the great missionary movement was beginning, which he opposed. See L.G. Champion, 'The Theology of John Ryland', pp.17-29; Culross, The Three Rylands.

7. Hall was also greatly affected by Edwards (D.E. Edwards, p.213). His Help to Zion's Travellers was similar in approach to Fullers' Gospel Worthy.

8. For a biography of Rippon, cf. Manley, Rippon and 'Making', plus articles in Wilson, Iveney, etc.

9. Manley, Rippon, pp.53-54.

10. Manley, Rippon, p.72.

11. Manley, Rippon, p.68.

Booth,¹² and four others.¹³ Within a few years Rippon rose to an influence among Particular Baptists almost as great as Gill had enjoyed.¹⁴ Rippon used this influence to move the Particular Baptists into a more Moderate Calvinism in his generation. Manley says, "The importance of John Rippon ... lies in the fact that he represented a combination of the best elements of both old and new traditions."¹⁵

Rippon began doing things which would have horrified Gill. In the hymnbooks he edited were hymns by Isaac Watts and the Wesleys,¹⁶ and he allowed Fuller and William Carey to share his pulpit.¹⁷ He compiled the important Baptist Register and was the key figure in the founding of the (English) Baptist Union, which was not exclusively Strict and Particular.¹⁸ Eventually he came to be actively involved in advocating Moderate Calvinism.¹⁹ Yet it was Andrew Fuller, not Rippon, who was the leading figure in opposing Hyper-Calvinism.

Fuller came from Northamptonshire. So did J.C. Ryland, Jr. Most likely they knew each other there, and in time they would be two of Rippon's closest friends.²⁰ Again we see a complicated network of associations. Brine ordained J.C. Ryland, Sr. Rippon succeeded, buried and biographed Gill; he also buried J.C. Ryland, Jr., who buried Robert Hall and Fuller. Fuller had a controversy with Button, the pastor of the group that split from Gill's church when Rippon was called, and later with William Rushton, John Stevens and other Hyper-Calvinists. The Junior Ryland wrote Fuller's biography. Fuller also came under the influence of Abraham Taylor, one of the Lime Street Lecturers with whom Gill debated on justification and whom Brine opposed on the Modern Question. Fuller, Ryland, Jr., and Rippon, of course, were all raised on the works of Gill and Brine; they reversed the trend that Gill and Brine fostered in his departing from Keach. As Hussey and Skepp

12. Booth later joined Rippon in helping the missionary movement. Even so, Booth had a controversy with Fuller and was 'higher' than Rippon, Fuller, or Ryland, Jr.

13. Manley, Rippon, p.56.

14. Manley calls him "the leading London figure for a generation or more". (Rippon, p.i).

15. Manley, 'Making', p.255.

16. Manley, Rippon, pp.155, 227-229.

17. Manley, Rippon, p.115.

18. Cf. Manley, Rippon, p.426.

19. Manley, Rippon, pp.146, 322.

20. Manley, Rippon, p.74.

provided the direction at first for Gill and Brine, it was Edwards who guided these three back to an evangelical approach. With all these variations and associations over the years, it should be remembered that they were all actually very similar in their Calvinism. An Arminian would basically class them together. And both the Hyper-Calvinists (Hussey, Skepp, Gill, Brine, et al) and the Arminians (the Wesleys, Whitby, et al) would tend to class the Moderate Calvinists (Fuller, Rippon, Ryland, Jr., Whitefield, et al) with the other group.

Fuller became the most outspoken and gave the movement form. For example, Rippon was called a 'Fullerite' by his opponents, but Fuller was never called a 'Ripponite'.²¹ Fuller was also influenced by Edwards.²² It is also clear that Fuller's own change was due to studying Calvin and possibly Luther himself. Strangely, Hyper-Calvinists from Gill onwards have referred to Calvin much less than might be expected. As we shall see in the next chapter, Gill's main sources were the Puritans and the Dutch Calvinists. Fuller was raised on Gill's works and changed when he came in contact with Calvin and Edwards. He considered his change to be a return to true Calvinism.²³ Some have detected a Baxterian undercurrent in Fuller's thought, but Kirkby's excellent study challenges this.²⁴ An apt description of the controversy with Hyper-Calvinism at this stage is by Fuller himself: "The writings of Calvin himself would now be deemed Arminian by a great number of our opponents."²⁵

As Rippon's work in Baptist polity made it possible for Fuller to gain acceptance by many, so Fuller's writings made it possible for William Carey to start the great missionary movement. By the time that Carey and the movement gained momentum, the Hyper-Calvinist movement was greatly outshadowed by Moderate Calvinism in Calvinistic Baptist circles.

Augustus Montague Toplady must be mentioned in any discussion of eighteenth-century Calvinism. We do not believe that he was actually a

21. Manley, Rippon, p.129; Thornton, p.95.

22. Cf. Kirkby, pp.54-63; Clipsham, pp.110-113; D.E. Edwards, pp.198ff.

23. Andrew Fuller, Works, p.323; Kirkby, pp.i, 77-79, etc.; Clipsham, pp.146-154.

24. Cf. especially Kirkby, pp.63-64.

25. Fuller, Works, p.168. See Chapters II, VIII and XII below.

Hyper-Calvinist, his friendship with Gill notwithstanding. Like Gill he too had a running controversy with Wesley, but unlike Gill he appreciated Whitefield and wrote a eulogy upon the occasion of his death.²⁶

There were many lesser Hyper-Calvinists than the ones we have mentioned. William Bentley was one.²⁷ Bentley knew and admired Hussey and considered him his spiritual father.²⁸ Samuel Stockell was another follower of Hussey, particularly respecting the 'Eternal Humanity of Christ' doctrine. At one time a member of Hussey's church, he went on to pastor in London during the height of Gill's fame and it is likely that they knew each other.²⁹ The celebrated Mrs. Anne Dutton could be considered in the same tradition.³⁰ She is known mostly through her many hymns and poems. It is debatable whether William Cudworth was a Hyper-Calvinist, for though he reprinted several works of the so-called Antinomians (Eaton, Simpson and Richardson), he seems more in the Lutheran or Moravian tradition. Like Hussey and a few others he was a paedobaptist. He also had a controversy with Wesley.³¹ John Johnson and John Martin³² were other Hyper-Calvinists of this period, but most others (listed in Chapter XII) were quite commonplace. Lewis Wayman and William Button were two such persons, known only because of their association with the Gill tradition. The latter wrote a treatise against Fuller.³³

26. Toplady, Works, vol.IV, pp.135-138. Toplady also wrote a brief biography of Watts (Works, vol.IV, pp.107-117).

27. See his The Lord the Helper of His People: With the Last Dying Words of That Eminent Servant of Christ, Mr. Joseph Hussey. On Bentley, see John Rogers, A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Mr. W. Bentley... To Which Are Added, Three Letters by Mr. Bentley, When At Bath; and (anonymous), An Elegy on the Death of Mr. William Bentley.

28. Bentley, The Lord the Helper of His People, pp.6, 17, 24.

29. Cf. (Anonymous) An Elegy Sacred to the Memory of Mr. Samuel Stockell; Oliver, 'Survey', p.10; Toon, 'Samuel Stockell'.

30. Cf. Toon, HC, pp.88, 149; Greenfield, The First Ripe Fruit, p.12; Julian, etc.

31. John Cennick, after he became a Moravian, recommended that Cudworth reprint Simpson's Man's Righteousness (Simpson, Man's Righteousness, p.2), thus establishing the Moravian connection. Cudworth himself claims to be rather in the Lutheran tradition but this is vague and not to be taken as an indication of ecclesiastical association (Cudworth, Observations, p.2). He was paedobaptist (ibid., pp.14-16), wrote against Wesley (Dialogue), but otherwise we know little about him. He was probably a leader in Moravian 'Antinomianism'.

32. Martin wrote against Fuller in Thoughts on the Duty of Man Relative to Faith in Jesus Christ. Earlier he had been a defender of Jackson and the Modern Question, but he changed from High to Hyper as Fuller was changing from Hyper to High.

33. Button and Fuller exchanged several tracts on the matter of 'Duty Faith' and while Button's are of minor importance, Fuller's are helpful as an appendix and defence of his Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation.

There was, however, one major voice whose influence was to gain prominence in the immediate post-Gill days. That was the eccentric William Huntington. 'The Immortal Coalheaver' (referring to his former employment and a word-play on Rom. 12:20) became the leader of the tradition for the next generation. Because of his erratic behaviour and extreme doctrines, he became the subject of numerous biographies³⁴ and has also given to posterity much autobiographical information himself.³⁵ Some of his followers, who were many and zealously devoted to him, referred to him as 'the Doctor'.³⁶ Huntington occasionally signed his letters as such, but he is most well-known for appending the letters 'S.S.' (Saved Sinner) after his name.³⁷

This unusual man was constantly involved in controversy. Maria de Fleury exchanged numerous treatises over several doctrines and was probably his kindest and most persistent critic.³⁸ His severest critic was probably 'The Prodigal', who described the Coalheaver's doctrines as "Heresy, Contradictions, Abominations, Witchcraft, Lies, and Devilism".³⁹ What made Huntington so controversial was his resurgence

34. E.g., Hooper, The Celebrated Coalheaver and Facts, Letters and Documents Concerning William Huntington; Burgess, Excellency of the Bible; Wright, The Life of William Huntington, S.S.; Onesimus, Memoirs of Huntington. Other biographical information can be found in the following: Feist, A Funeral Sermon on the Loss of that Great Champion in the Cause of Christ, etc.; Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, pp.540-555; vol.II, pp.625-634; Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.102-110; Paul, Story of the Gospel in England, vol.IV, pp.377-389; Carter, Lamentations: Eight Letters on the Lamentable Death of the Late Rev. Wm. Huntington; and DNB.

35. He wrote two autobiographical/devotional pieces: The Kingdom of Heaven Taken by Prayer (in Works, vol.I) and The Bank of Faith (Works, vol.III).

36. Wright, Life, p.97. Hooper says that Huntington gave himself this title (Coalheaver, p.24). Some of his opponents called him 'the immoral coalheaver'. Of course, no university or college gave him a doctorate, unlike Gill, and his writings are anything but scholarly.

37. Huntington appended these letters when he was converted, though some have linked it with his change of name due to the infamous scandal. Cf. Parkinson, Mirror, pp.31-32; Huntington, Works, vol.I, pp.30-32, 65-103; and Chapter X below.

38. See Bibliography at the end of this present work. She also exchanged tracts with Huntington's daughter, Elizabeth Morton.

39. 'The Prodigal' (pseudonym), Huntington Unmasked, p.23. This author may have been the first to refer to Huntington's followers as Huntingtonians (ibid., pp.25, 73, etc.). Another anonymous writer ('O.F.T.') wrote Four Letters rebuking Huntington for 'Vanity, Presumption and Arrogance'. Of Huntington's writings Andrew Fuller commented: "I have never read anything more void of any thing like true religion" (quoted in John Ryland, Jr., The Work of Faith, p.387). Tracts against him included: Garrett, Huntington Corrected; 'P.' ('A Lover of Justice'), A Rod for Revilers; Walker, A Letter; Carter, The Tombstone of the Late Rev. William Huntington, A Monument of Unequalled Arrogance and Insult to the Whole Protestant Church in the British Empire; Leggett, Defamation of the Churches; Parkinson, The Barber's Mirror; King, A Check to Uncharitableness; Carter, Abolition of the Moral Law; Hacker, Believer's Entanglement by the Moral Law; Nash, Ignis (Cont'd)...

of doctrinal Antinomianism without the cautious reservations of Gill or even Cudworth. For example, he reprinted Saltmarsh's Free Grace, but unlike Gill with Crisp he provided no clarifying notes. This whole subject will be examined fully in Chapter X. Huntington was a paedobaptist, but his followers included Baptists and even some non-Baptists. His influence was immense and bridged the gap between the powerful personalities of John Gill and the leader of the Hyper-Calvinist movement in the early nineteenth-century, William Gadsby.

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Fatuus; Mechanic, A Letter; Ladson, A Ram's Horn Trumpeter; and several by Vigors M'Culla: The Coalheaver in the Balance; The Sieve of Truth; and Infallibility of the Ministry. Defenders included John Eedes, Thomas Burgess, Thomas Packer, 'A Disciple of Christ' and 'Seek Truth'.

E. HYPER-CALVINISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The popularity of William Gadsby of Manchester with the working classes at the time of the Industrial Revolution helped Hyper-Calvinism to spread beyond the southern English districts where it had hitherto prospered almost exclusively.¹ Gadsby was far more noted as a preacher than as a writer;² and though he wrote many tracts, he lacked the academic abilities of Gill but he was a little more tempered than Huntington.³ Gadsby revived the doctrinal Antinomianism of Huntington and Crisp and led the movement of Particular Baptists to stress not only Strict Communion but also the doctrine that believers are under the Gospel, not the Moral Law, as their standard and rule. Hence the name that came to be associated with the movement, The Gospel Standard.⁴

Gadsby's mantle fell upon a seceding Church of England minister who was not at all similar in background to Gadsby, but together with Gadsby the name of Joseph Charles Philpot is remembered as the leader of a generation of Hyper-Calvinist Baptists.⁵ Philpot wrote more than Gadsby did - mostly sermons - and was involved in several controversies of his own. Without parallel in the circles in which he

1. Biographical information on Gadsby can be found in DNB; John Gadsby, Memoir of William Gadsby; Halley, Lancashire: Its Puritanism and Nonconformity, vol.II, pp.484-486; Paul, Story of the Gospel in England, vol.IV, pp.392-397; Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.131-133; Julian, A Dictionary of Hymnology, p.403; Watmuff, The Triumphing of Christ Jesus the Lord in the Death of the Righteous; and occasional notes in The Gospel Standard magazine. In the present work, we refer to William Gadsby as 'Gadsby' and his son as 'John Gadsby'. His doctrines are summarized in his Catechisms and Last Will. (We have included the latter in an Appendix.)

2. Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.273; Hulse, Free Offer, pp.11-12; John Gadsby, Memoir of Gadsby, pp.101, 106, 108, 110, 112.

3. The more important works of Gadsby are collected in two small volumes, sometimes with editorial revision or abridgement. More balanced than Huntington, Gadsby still had his eccentricities. He was ridiculed at times for allegedly glorying in the flesh by his strong 'Experimental' preaching (see Chapter X), and one modern writer described him as "the comic of Manchester, William Gadsby, the pioneer of Gillism in an industrial context and the greatest of the hypers" (W.R. Ward, 'The Baptists and the Transformation of the Church, 1780-1830', p.176).

4. The Gospel Standard Baptists are part of the Strict and Particular Baptists and as such are covered in R.F. Chambers and Robert Oliver, The Strict Baptist Chapels of England (5 volumes). For a history of the movement, see S.F. Paul, Further History of the Gospel Standard Baptists (6 volumes). On the magazine, see John Gadsby, 'History of the Gospel Standard', in The Gospel Standard, vol.XXXVII (1871), pp.165-170, 199-204, 240-246, 282-287, 334-340, 390-393, 427-430.

5. On Philpot, see The Seceders (4 volumes); Letters by the Late Joseph Charles Philpot, M.A., with A Brief Memoir of His Life and Labours; Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.136-140; C.H. Marston, The Crown of Righteousness; Paul, Story of the Gospel in England, vol.IV, pp.415-432; and anecdotes, etc., in sermons and The Gospel Standard magazine.

travelled,⁶ Philpot exercised his influence mainly through the magazine started by Gadsby's son John, appropriately named The Gospel Standard.⁷ The Gospel Standard Baptists have never been an ecclesiastical denomination in the traditional sense of the term. Their homogeneity arises from the list of ministers appearing in Gadsby's magazine, placement upon which was dependent on subscription to the detailed Articles of Faith.⁸ Other leaders in the early days of the Gospel Standard movement include William Tiptaft⁹ and Frederick Tryon¹⁰ (both of whom seceded from the Established Church with Philpot¹¹) and John Warburton¹² and John Kershaw.¹³

Contemporary with the rise of Gospel Standard Hyper-Calvinism was another branch of Particular Baptists. Its main representatives were John Stevens,¹⁴ William Palmer¹⁵ and John Foreman.¹⁶ Stevens was the

6. That Philpot was the leader in Gospel Standard circles was not disputed even by his opponents (e.g. Aikman, Judgement, p.2). Some accused him of leading the Churches further from the path of the Puritans and even of Gill; hence came the term 'Philpotism'.

7. John Gadsby was a publisher of many Hyper-Calvinist works and no mean writer himself, notably in conjunction with his numerous travels in the Middle East.

8. There is a dispute about when these Articles were written, mainly due to the added Articles which caused considerable division in 1876 due to their emphatic rejection of offers. We have included these articles in an Appendix. Cf. Honeysett, How to Address Unbelievers; Wileman, 'The Secret History of the Four Added Articles'.

9. Philpot wrote a biography of Tiptaft (William Tiptaft) and both are covered in The Seceders. See also Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.140-142; Paul, The Story of the Gospel in England, vol.IV, pp.418-432.

10. See Frederick Tryon, A Small Memento of Frederick Tryon. Tryon eventually disagreed with and separated from Philpot and Tiptaft. He did not fully agree with the Articles of Faith and disagreed with Philpot's controversial marriage with a girl half his age (who was Tiptaft's niece and of 'questionable spiritual profession'). See the following: Tryon, Remarks; Sheep and Wolves; A Few Opinions; A Caution; Present Tokens; A Short Sermon on Stumblingblocks; and A Reply to Mr. Shakespear's Letter; and Shakespear, Refutation.

11. It does not appear that any of these seceders were on friendly terms with Anglicans, except with Parks.

12. Warburton's famous autobiography, Mercies of a Covenant God, is similar in style to Huntington's autobiographical works and has often been reprinted. See also John Warburton, Jr. (his son, whose biography was written by Charles Hemington), A Testimony to the Lovingkindness and Faithfulness of a Covenant God (Preface by Philpot); Philpot, Reviews, vol.II, pp.24-32; Paul, Story of the Gospel in England, vol.IV, pp.400-407; Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.133-135.

13. See his autobiography, John Kershaw, and Paul, Story of the Gospel in England, vol.IV, pp.407-413; Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.142-145. Like many, if not most, first-generation Gospel Standard ministers, Warburton and Kershaw were ordained by Gadsby.

14. Like so many other Hyper-Calvinists, Stevens was from Northamptonshire. His church in central London grew to large proportions and he produced a large number of books and tracts, nearly all of a controversial nature. See his Memoirs for biographical information, as well as John Gadsby, Hymn Writers, pp.119-121; Julian, Dictionary of Hymnology, p.1093.

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leader of the three and the most well-known, although the others made their own original contributions. Of special significance to the Hyper-Calvinist tradition was Stevens's Help for the True Disciples of Immanuel, written against Andrew Fuller. In it he appeals to Gill, Hussey, Brine, Wayman and Button, and there is little in it concerning 'Duty Faith' that would be rejected by the Gospel Standard preachers. The school of Stevens, however, fell out with the school of Gadsby and Philpot over two doctrines: Antinomianism and Pre-Existerianism. Stevens, Palmer and Foreman rejected the doctrinal Antinomianism of their rivals, resulting in numerous tracts and vilifications.¹⁷ On the other hand, it was Stevens who accepted Hussey's unusual doctrine of the 'Eternal Humanity of Christ'.¹⁸ This branch centred around London and was represented in two magazines, The Gospel Herald and The Earthen Vessel. Its influence was small and has almost completely vanished today. Virtually the only ones who remember them are the Gospel Standard Baptists, who still loath their memories.

Though not fully accepted by either of these two branches, James Wells of Surrey exerted enormous influence in mid-nineteenth century Hyper-Calvinism via his burgeoning Surrey Tabernacle.¹⁹ The Tabernacle was probably second in size in Nonconformist circles only to Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle. Since both of these preachers were Particular Baptists in South London, the public was surprized at the distance between them. 'The notorious James Wells', as he was often known,

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15. His main work, now quite rare but important in the Free Offer Controversy, was A Free Enquiry into the Subject of Offered Grace and General Invitations. A prodigious writer, he should not be confused with the Tractarian of the same name.

16. See Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.146-148 for details for his life.

17. Stevens sometimes referred to Gadsby as 'Mr. Antinomos' (John Gadsby, Hymn-Writers, p.121) and it was against Gadsby that he wrote Doctrinal Antinomianism Refuted. As Stevens opposed Gadsby, so Palmer later opposed Philpot, whom he labelled "the Champion of Huntingtonianism" (Palmer, Tekel, p.1), a pope, a bigot, and an autocrat. The controversy was very personal, as seen in Palmer's A Plain Statement.

18. Palmer and Foreman are fairly silent on this controversy, which we discuss in Chapter V below.

19. See Well's autobiography, A Concise Account of the Experience of James Wells, (this was written early in his ministry); and his Achor's Gloomy Vale, pp.99-157. Wells included many personal anecdotes in sermons in The Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit (note the similarity in title to Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit). Other information is found in Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.148-152 and Inasmuch, pp.78-80; Robert Oliver, 'The Dangers of a Successful Ministry'.

repeatedly castigated Spurgeon²⁰ and through the publication of many large volumes of sermons he led Hyper-Calvinism into new extremes. In fact, it would be safe to say that Wells was the most extreme Hyper-Calvinist preacher or writer in the history of the tradition. His exoneration of Rahab's lie caused all but his most faithful friends to rebuke him. Even the Gospel Standard preachers could not go as far as Wells did. We will examine the Rahab controversy more closely in Chapter X.

Samuel Eyres Pierce²¹ was another important Hyper-Calvinist during the first half of last century but, as far as we can discern, had no formal links with any of the other branches.²² A prolific writer, Pierce had a mild temperament and wrote numerous devotional pieces. He spoke out only a little concerning the Free Offer Controversy, but was more active in the Eternal Generation/Humanity Controversy.

Up until the early nineteenth century, Hyper-Calvinism was almost entirely confined to Baptist and Independent churches, but with Robert Hawker the tradition spread a little in the Church of England.²³ Hawker wrote much and is known for his Commentary even today, but lacks the colour of Huntington, Gadsby or Wells. Hawker, who was yet another leader called 'the Doctor',²⁴ opposed doctrinal Antinomianism and Pre-Existerianism while entering into controversies over baptism less than one would have expected, given the controversial tenor of Hyper-Calvinism on the subject. Even so, he defended staying within the

20. Cf. Isaac McCarthy, What, Then, Does Mr. Spurgeon Preach? Being, An Examination of Mr. James Wells's Review of Mr. Spurgeon's Ministry; Oliver, 'Survey', p.15, and 'The Dangers of a Successful Ministry'. Spurgeon sometimes referred to him as 'King James'.

21. See Pierce's autobiography, A True Outline and Sketch of the Life of Samuel Eyres Pierce. This Samuel Pierce should not be confused with Samuel Pearce, who was involved in the missionary movement with Fuller and Rippon at the same time. Hazelton gives information on Pierce in Hold Fast, pp.130-131. See also DNB. His Confession of Faith is found in Miscellanies, pp.63-80. Pierce wrote 'My Own Funeral Sermon, To Be Read at Shoe-Lane After My Decease' (in A True Outline, pp.141-170).

22. Toon says that Pierce was a friend of Robert Hawker ('Supralapsarian Christology', p.27). This may well be, for they are similar in style and doctrine, except that Pierce was a Baptist and Hawker was an Anglican. Hawker mentions Pierce only in a few instances. Pierce initially was a Methodist but unlike other Hypers with a 'free offer' background, his Hyperist 'non-offer' views were more friendly than those of Gill.

23. See 'Memoir of Hawker' in Hawker, Works, vol.I, pp.1-271; DNB; Dowling, The Riches of God's Grace; Lane, The Last Conflict; Mutter, Zion's Faithful Priest; J.A.Jones, The Cause of God and Truth; Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.72-74; Julian, Dictionary of Hymnology, p.499. This Robert Hawker is not to be confused with the famous poet and author Robert S. Hawker, who was a contemporary and also an Anglican.

24. E.g. Samuel Turner, Remarks on Dr. Hawker's Pamphlet on Sanctification; Hopwood, A Letter, p.8; J.A. Jones, Cause, p.14; Jacks, Hints, p.6; Birts, Moral Government, p.6.

Established Church.²⁵ Other Anglican Hyper-Calvinists influenced by Hawker include Alexander Ramsey and William Parks.²⁶

Hyper-Calvinism in Independent churches in the mid-1800's was led by Joseph Irons, founder and pastor of the Grove Chapel, London.²⁷ Irons exerted influence mainly through his numerous small books and his widely-read weekly sermons. Being in London at the same time as other controversial Hyper-Calvinists, he was in several controversies with the other branches but in some respects he was respected by them all and was seen as a dependable link with past and contemporary Independent tradition. However, he could not quite be considered a Huntingtonian on the Moral Law question, though more than a few who had sat under the Coalheaver's ministry came to sit under Irons after Huntington's death. A portrait of Huntington still hangs in the Grove Chapel, where Irons himself is buried under the pulpit.

This branch continued through the efforts of Thomas Bradbury,²⁸ Irons's successor. Bradbury published prolifically but was not involved in any controversies of note. His stature is seen in his regularly large congregation, wide readership, and perpetuation of Iron's tradition. Bradbury's successor at the Grove Chapel was Henry Atherton, an energetic organizer who, in addition to numerous small books of his own, helped found the Sovereign Grace Union (S.G.U.).²⁹ The S.G.U. reprinted a large number of small pamphlets and books under Atherton's leadership; many but not all of them were Hyper-Calvinist. The S.G.U.

25. E.g., A Letter to the Rev. John Stevens, pp.6-9.

26. Parks, incidentally, was Irish and therefore a rare instance of a non-English or non-American Hyper-Calvinist, though we may add that he ministered in England. For information, see Notes of Sermons Hitherto Unpublished, With a Brief Memoir of the Author by David Doudney. Philpot reviewed Parks favourably in Reviews, vol.II, pp.502-513.

27. See Gabriel Bayfield, A Memoir of the Rev. Joseph Irons; John Gadsby, Hymn-Writers, pp.84-86; Lock, History of Grove Chapel; Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.116-120; Julian, Dictionary of Hymnology, p.571.

28. See Mary Doggett, Life and Letters of Thomas Bradbury; Sykes, Two Funeral Sermons; Lock, History of Grove Chapel, pp.85-124. He should not be confused with the Thomas Bradbury who worked with John Gill at the Lime Stree Lectures.

29. On Atherton, see Lock, History of Grove Chapel, pp.131-137. The Articles of Faith of the S.G.U. are found in our Appendices; an exposition of them is found in Donald Beaton, Some Foundation Truths of the Reformed Faith. Erroll Hulse feels that the present S.G.U. tends to stay in the 'Non-offer' tradition, though it has been ambivalent on it in its history (The Free Offer, p.12). Technically the work of Atherton and the S.G.U. belong to the present century but we mention them here to note their unity with Bradbury and Irons.

itself continues today. It has not been entirely Hyper-Calvinist, but it has always been respected by all of the other branches. Members have included Independents, Baptists and Anglicans. Most of its publications have had to do with the distinctives of Calvinism and more than a few have been Protestant apologetics against Roman Catholicism.

Of course, there were dozens of other Hyper-Calvinists during the nineteenth century, but we have mentioned only the major factions and leaders. We will list as many Hyper-Calvinist writers as possible in our Conclusion, but it may be helpful to the reading of this work to keep in mind a few other lesser names. William Tucker³⁰ was a layman who wrote an important book on predestination, but whether he was in fact Hyper-Calvinist is debatable. A Baptist who was converted through George Whitefield, he may have had some association with Fuller, which would be unusual considering his exceptionally high views regarding reprobation (see Chapter IV below). Thomas Burgess,³¹ J. Jenkins,³² and Jenkin's pastoral successor John Vinall,³³ were more or less followers of Huntington and, like Tucker, over-lapped the two centuries. Another disciple of Huntington, Vigors M'Culla,³⁴ came to disagree with some of his teachings and wrote many books and pamphlets, some of them against Huntington.

Washington Wilks was similar to Tucker, whom he often quotes, but his Defence clearly marks him out as belonging to the school of Calvinism investigated in our work. Little is known of him except that he was a Baptist and defended Hawker against the Pre-Existerian cavils of Stevens on the one hand and the Antinomian excesses of the Gospel Standard branch on the other. Grey Hazlerigg³⁵ parted company with Philpot and John Gadsby over a fine point concerning progressive sanctification (see Chapter X).³⁶ Arthur Triggs was long associated with

30. There is a short biographical note on Tucker in John Gadsby, Hymn-Writers, p.130. Tucker possibly opposed Hawker and doctrinal Antinomianism (cf. Wilks, p.66).

31. See 'A Lover of Truth', The Days of the Upright ... A Short Account of the Peaceful End of the Late Rev. Thomas Burgess.

32. See Last Fragments of the Rev. J. Jenkins.

33. See Ebenezer Vinall, A Brief Memoir of the Late Rev. John Vinall. Philpot reviewed Vinall favourably in Reviews, vol.II, pp.441-450.

34. See his autobiography, Zion's Traveller Indebted to Sovereign Grace.

35. See Hazlerigg, Sweet Memories and Letters to a Mother for biographical information.

36. Four works of his are noteworthy in this controversy: Letter to Mr. Gadsby; Replies and Confessions; Indwelling Sin; and Thoughts Upon God's Word.

the Hyper-Calvinist magazine Zion's Witness, in which may be found much biographical information on him.³⁷ This magazine maintained its own small tradition; some would place it between the Gadsby/Philpot and the Stevens factions. John Hazelton³⁸ published a fair number of sermons and his son wrote helpful biographical data on others mentioned in this study. His Memoir was written by W.J. Styles, who wrote two very important works concerning doctrine and church practice. Styles, whose era touched the present century, had a distinctive style of writing and, like Hazelton, belongs rather in the Stevens camp. Other significant Hyper-Calvinists of the period include Samuel Cozens,³⁹ John Grace,⁴⁰ David Doudney,⁴¹ Israel Atkinson,⁴² Joseph Tanner,⁴³ Charles Hemington⁴⁴ and William Rushton.⁴⁵

Hyper-Calvinism within Baptist churches in the United States has been propagated mainly and longest by the various branches of the Primitive Baptists.⁴⁶ Their roots go back to the eighteenth century,⁴⁷ but it was during the last century that they reached the peak of their momentum. They arose mainly as a reaction against the missionary movement. One group associated with them is the 'Two-Seeds-in-the-

37. Triggs wrote two autobiographical works: A Memorial of the Loving-Kindnesses, Tender Mercies, and Sovereign Grace of the Lord God of Israel and The Second Part of a Memorial, etc.

38. See W.J. Styles, John Hazelton: A Memoir; John E. Hazelton (his son, with whom he is sometimes confused), Hold Fast, pp.152-154.

39. See Cozens, A Christmas Box, pp.39ff. It is difficult to ascertain exactly where Cozens was placed with relation to the rival Hyper-Calvinist factions.

40. See his Recollections of John Grace; Philpot, Reviews, vol.II, pp.532-539.

41. See his Led and Fed. Doudney had much influence in Hyperism via his place in the publishing realm.

42. See Hoddy, Memoir of Israel Atkinson.

43. See The Life, Diary, and Letters of the Late Joseph Tanner (with a Note by Philpot).

44. See Memorial of Charles Hemington (preface by J.K. Popham). Hemington and John Gadsby were key figures in the drafting of the G.S. Articles of Faith, including the additions.

45. Rushton's Defence of Particular Redemption was written against Fuller and contains references to Gill (pp.12-13, 15, 119, 124, 145), Brine (pp.89, 139-141), Hussey (pp.180, 182-183) and Crisp (pp.47, 89, 178-179).

46. On Primitive Baptists, see the following: R.H. Pittman, Biographical History of Primitive or Old School Baptist Ministers of the United States; Hassell, History of the Church of God; Melton, The American Encyclopedia of American Religions, vol.I, pp.384-391. On Primitive Baptist doctrine, good introductions include W.S. Craig, Short Articles on Primitive Baptist Faith and Practice; Pittman, Questions and Answers.

47. The Kehukee Association of Primitive Baptists was founded in 1765. Cf. Hassell, History of the Church of God.

Spirit Predestinarian Baptists', which denies the need for evangelism because it feels that the elect are genealogically and biologically related to 'the woman' (Eve) and the reprobate are related to 'the serpent' (Satan).⁴⁸ They have virtually disappeared and in the main have been opposed by other Primitive Baptists.⁴⁹ Leaders among Primitive Baptists have included John Leland,⁵⁰ Cushing and Sylvester Hassell,⁵¹ and R.H. Pittman. Primitive Baptists consider themselves Calvinists (though they admittedly disagree with Calvin on some points⁵²), and contend that "All denominations of the present day, except the Old School or Primitive Baptists, advocate Arminianism in some of its alluring and plausible forms."⁵³ They do not mind being described under these names but generally take offence at terms like 'Hardshell' or 'Anti-missionary' (by which they are often called).⁵⁴ In recent years the Primitive Baptist Library has reprinted several standard Hyper-Calvinist books, including nearly all of Gill's writings, an abridgement of Hussey's Operations of Grace, Rushton's Defence of Particular Redemption, several works of William and John Gadsby, plus Crosby's History. They have a cordial relationship with the Gospel Standard Baptists, but they are by no means a branch of a latter and have certain doctrinal differences between them. In recent years, R.V. Sarrells has caused some controversy within Primitive Baptist circles by a call to moderation and a repudiation of definitive Hyper-Calvinist doctrines. His Systematic Theology is a fairly scholarly piece of literature but is virtually unknown outside of the Primitive Baptists.

48. On the 'Two-Seeders', see Melton, Encyclopedia of American Religions, vol.I, p.391; Pittman, Questions, p.96. See Chapter IV.

49. E.g. Pittman, Questions, p.96.

50. 1754-1841. See Hassell, History, pp.622-628.

51. Their massive History of the Church of God displays a wide knowledge of church history and theology, but it is greatly marred by a Hyper-Calvinist bias and ecclesio-centricity.

52. E.g. Craig, Short Articles, p.14.

53. Pittman, Questions, p.19. Cf. Craig, Short Articles, p.15. This is exactly the perspective of Hyper-Calvinism in general: all other 'Calvinists' are semi-Arminian mongrels. See Chapter II, Section I; and Chapter XII.

54. E.g. Pittman, Biographical History, p.358. Similarly, as we shall see in the present work, virtually all 'Hyper-Calvinists' reject the term which is the subject of the present investigation. Few have ever so described themselves. See Chapter XII.

F. HYPER-CALVINISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Gospel Standard Baptists have declined considerably since the golden days of J.C. Philpot. With the exception of J.K. Popham,¹ editor of The Gospel Standard magazine at the beginning of the century, the leading voices lack the controversial leadership qualities which characterized the movement in its earlier years. There have been numerous books, pamphlets and what-have-you, but by and large the movement lives in the past. Controversies within the movement are certainly not as up-to-date or as heated as before. Recent preachers or writers of note include S.F. Paul, J.H. Gosden, Ernest Roe, Caleb Sawyer, John Raven, Fred Windridge and B.A. Ramsbottom.

Orthodox Calvinism in other spheres declined drastically in Britain in the years between the Wars, but there has been a resurgence since the 1950's and this has had a tempering effect upon many Hyper-Calvinists. The unquestioned leader of the revival of Puritan Calvinism in post-war Britain has been D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, pastor of Westminster Chapel, London. Yet another who was referred to as 'the Doctor', he was no Hyper-Calvinist and did much to correct wrong notions about the Puritans. Others who have done much to influence the spread of High Calvinism include James I. Packer, Iain Murray and Erroll Hulse. Iain Murray has long been editor of The Banner of Truth Trust, which was founded with the help of Lloyd-Jones and has reprinted many works of the Puritans. He was once pastor at the Grove Chapel, Irons's old church. Erroll Hulse once worked with the Banner of Truth Trust and has written several helpful pieces relevant to the debates between High and Hyper-Calvinism. None of the above, we add, have been Hyper-Calvinists and they have done much to off-set the extremes of Calvinism. But they also have opposed Low Calvinism.

If the Gospel Standard and Strict Baptists have lacked the colourful personalities which characterized the controversies since Philpot, other branches have made up the difference in two individuals who rank with any of the Hyper-Calvinist movement's leading lights. The first is Herman Hoeksema,² a Dutch-born American pastor who caused no little

1. See J.H. Gosden, James Kidwell Popham; S.F. Paul, History of the Gospel in England, vol.II, pp.135-218.

2. See Gertrude Hoeksema, Therefore I Have Spoken. When we refer to Herman Hoeksema we use 'Hoeksema', while 'Homer Hoeksema' refers to his son.

controversy in the Christian Reformed Church in the United States in the 1920's. Some of the under-currents of the earlier debates in Holland between Herman Bavinck and Abraham Kuyper came to a head in America in 1924 when Hoeksema was expelled from the Christian Reformed Church.³ He and his followers then founded the Protestant Reformed Church, which, though it is a small denomination, has had several able representatives in presenting the debates about common grace and the Free Offer to the Calvinistic world at large. These include Hoeksema's son Homer Hoeksema, David Engelsma, Herman Hanko, George Ophoff, and G. Van Baren.

The school of Hoeksema, like all other schools investigated herein, rejects the description 'Hyper-Calvinism'.⁴ We grant that there are many important differences between it and the other branches, but in rejecting the Free Offer it is certainly deserving of the description which it disowns. In our investigation we will point out these differences and similarities. It is important at the outset to note that this school, unlike all the others, arose without the direct influence of previous Hyper-Calvinists. References to the likes of Gill, Huntington or Gadsby are almost entirely absent. The movement has always been emphatically paedobaptist but has had very little contact with the paedobaptist Hyper-Calvinist tradition in Britain.⁵ Rather, its sources reach back to Holland and its controversies have mostly been with others within the Dutch Reformed tradition (opponents have included Louis Berkhof, G.C. Berkouwer, Cornelius Van Til and Klaus Schilder). Let us also add that Herman Hoeksema is probably the only Hyper-

3. See Gertrude Hoeksema, Therefore I Have Spoken and God's Covenant Faithfulness. While some persons may wish to think of Hoeksema gallantly walking out of the Christian Reformed Church in protest against the inroads of Arminianism, the record (as we see it) indicates that he was disciplined and expelled not so much by Arminian or semi-Arminian forces but by those representing the High Calvinism of seventeenth century Dortian and Westminster Calvinism. But, then, from a Hyper-Calvinistic perspective anything less than itself is semi-Arminian.

4. This is the thesis of Engelsma's Hyper-Calvinism and the Call of the Gospel. As we hope to prove in the course of the present effort, Engelsma's thesis is marred not only by a misunderstanding of historic Hyper-Calvinism and his inadequate first-hand knowledge of the sources, but also by the same bias found in all other Hyper-Calvinist polemics that blur the essential differences between themselves and historic High Calvinism, whatever the shade. We do grant, however, that Engelsma correctly notes some of the true differences between Hoeksema's school and others.

5. Hoeksema preached in the Grove Chapel in London on a visit to Europe early in his ministry, but otherwise his contact was minimal. His sights even then were set on Holland. He makes only a few references to Gill in his works, but usually it is only to disagree with him on baptism.

Calvinist of scholarly abilities comparable with those of John Gill. His literary output was enormous, even if there was considerable overlap of content therein.⁶ Unfortunately, some of his writing was in the Dutch language, so our research has been limited to the English sources – but even so, we have had much to sift through. The disadvantage of the language barrier has been balanced by a most helpful doctoral dissertation on Hoeksema and the Free Offer Controversy, The Well-Meant Gospel Offer by Alexander C. De Jong.⁷

Another more recent theological movement within High Calvinism, mainly of a Dutch background, has marked similarities with the school of Hoeksema. This is the school of Theonomism. Taking its impetus from the 'Theology of Cosmogenic Idea' put forth by Van Til, Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd, Theonomism is a Post-Millenarian form of High Calvinism which is mostly concerned with Christian social ethics. It is vigorously anti-Antinomian but, as we shall see, in some respects has gone full circle and has taught something akin to Antinomianism, namely that God is at liberty to suspend the Moral Law to suit higher purposes. (This will be seen in the case of Rahab). Rousas Rushdoony has been the most prolific Theonomist author,⁸ but Greg Bahnsen's Theonomy in Christian Ethics is probably the best formulation of the school's principles. It is not our estimation that Theonomism at present is Hyper-Calvinistic. However, because of the involvement in current Calvinistic debate and its relationship to the schools of Hoeksema and Van Til, it deserves some note in our research. It is our opinion that the movement could well be in the process of formulating a new branch of Hyper-Calvinism from a yet different perspective. That is, in its emphasis on the command of God to obedience of faith and the emphasis

6. His magnum opus is his massive Reformed Dogmatics, but most of its content was previously presented in his much larger The Triple Knowledge (3 volumes), which was an exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism. Each contains matter not found in the other. Similar to the second of these is The Voice of Our Fathers by Homer Hoeksema, a scholarly but highly polemical exposition of the Canons of Dort. As we have not had access to The Standard Bearer, the magazine of the Protestant Reformed Church, we have limited our references to the works in English published by the writers of Hoeksema's tradition. This is also in keeping with our general, but not exclusive, practice of treating the Hyper-Calvinist journals only in a minimal way.

7. The Protestant Reformed Church has, of course, rejected the conclusions of this work. A much smaller work, Christ Freely Offered by Kenneth Stebbins, is more recent and is partly sympathetic to Hoeksema's position without entirely accepting it.

8. See especially the two large volumes of his Institutes of Biblical Law.

on Law, the practice of the Free Offer based upon the incentive of grace may be threatened. One wonders if any of the Theonomists will one day reject the Free Offer. It would also prove interesting to gauge the effect that Theonomism has had on other schools of High Calvinism with respect to evangelism.

There has been only one other voice this century within Hyper-Calvinism which can equal Hoeksema's for force, popularity or output. That is the voice of the enigmatic, if not eccentric, Arthur W. Pink.⁹ Pink started out as a Dispensationalist¹⁰ but came to be one of its harshest critics. Still, he was always a very high, even Supralapsarian, Calvinist.¹¹ Most of his life was spent in relative obscurity but since his death in 1952 his works have sold enormously, most of them being culled from the monthly Studies in the Scriptures he authored for several decades. His works are not as scholarly as those of Gill or Hoeksema, but for what they are they are fairly extensive. His many books have been published by at least eight publishers and fall into three categories: doctrinal, experimental (but not in the full Philpot sense), and expository. There is an obvious overlap of content in them but his efforts in the first of these areas cover to a reasonable depth all the loci of systematic theology except ecclesiology.¹² His small book,

9. On Pink, see Belcher, Arthur W. Pink: Born to Write, and Iain Murray, The Life of Arthur W. Pink. Murray's book stresses Pink's anti-Dispensationalism and is likely to hinder Pink's future popularity. Murray briefly mentions Pink's relationship with Hyper-Calvinism but is deficient in assessing the instances in which Pink rejects the Free Offer. The Banner of Truth, of which Murray is Editor, has published several of Pink's books, including an abridgement of his Sovereignty of God. Like Gill and Hawker, Pink was given an honorary doctorate but discouraged others referring to him as 'the Doctor' or 'Dr. Pink' (Belcher, Born to Write, pp.66-67; Murray, Pink, p.21). If there was anyone with whom Pink could almost entirely identify, that person would undoubtedly be S.E. Pierce.

10. Dispensationalists have usually been Low Calvinists and are mentioned occasionally in our discussions. Theonomism classes Dispensationalism as a kind of Antinomianism (see Chapter X) and Dispensationalism has been a constant rival and opponent of Federalist Calvinism. It is virtually impossible for one to be a Dispensational Hyper-Calvinist and we know of none deserving that description.

11. Murray tends to bring out the variation and development of Pink's Calvinism, while Belcher says that "Theologically, from the very beginning of his Christian life he appears to have been a strong Calvinist ... there is no evidence of any change in the matter of Calvinistic convictions" (Born to Write, p.37. Cf. p.89).

12. Murray's book brings out Pink's growing ecclesiastical isolationism, which will certainly impair Pink's future influence. A discussion of Pink's ecclesiology is conspicuously absent from his own writings, which is perplexing in the light of his personal affairs. For example, during the last decade of his life Pink virtually gave up all attendance at public worship. For many years he was a pastor but frequently involved in controversy, resulting in a growing itinerant preaching ministry and a literary career that eventually became his entire life work.

The Sovereignty of God, has gone through several editions and abridgements by several publishers and has been a major tool used by contemporary High Calvinists in introducing others to the current Reformed movement, even as Gill's Cause of God and Truth was in the past (and still is, to some extent). If, as we feel, Pink was a Hyper-Calvinist, his works have almost certainly sold more copies than any other Hyper-Calvinist. He has nearly equalled Gill in output and time may reveal that his influence has been the largest of all, especially given the fact that his popularity has been increasing each year (Murray's book notwithstanding).

Pink considered himself a Puritan born too late. He repeatedly quotes the Puritans¹³ and his assessment of other Reformed writers shows where he himself stood. He both praised and rebuked Gill¹⁴ and 'James Hussey', as he calls him.¹⁵ His literary style closely resembles that of Samuel Eyres Pierce, whom he often quotes approvingly, and he has mixed opinions about Huntington.¹⁶ On the other hand, Pink speaks highly of Fuller¹⁷ and especially Spurgeon, whom he considered "perhaps God's most valuable gift unto his people since the days of the Puritans".¹⁸ But it was the Puritans he praises and employs the most, especially Manton, Goodwin and Owen.

There has been some debate about whether Pink was in fact a Hyper-Calvinist. Needless to say, opinions on this question not only vary according to the amount of research done on Pink himself but also according to the understanding of 'Hyper-Calvinism' by the critics themselves, whose own theological perspectives must be taken into account. Hence, we hope to resolve this debate in the present work, but

13. See e.g., Pink, Reconciliation, pp.122-123, 132-133, 139; Murray, Pink, especially pp.228-229. Pink's earlier writings quoted others more than his later writings. He admitted he was not an original writer (The Redeemer's Return, p.8. Cf. Belcher, Born to Write, p.34).

14. E.g., Sermon on the Mount, p.128; Reconciliation, p.125.

15. E.g., Reconciliation, p.125; Spiritual Union and Communion, pp.50-51.

16. Cf. Murray, Pink, pp.138-139.

17. E.g., Objections to God's Sovereignty Answered, p.12.

18. Quoted in Murray, Pink, p.250. Pink spoke of Owen as "that prince of theologians among the Puritans, John Owen. Yea, far more candid and faithful was he than those hyper-Calvinists who profess to admire his teachings" (quoted in Murray, Pink, p.249). See Pink, Gleanings from the Scriptures, p.290; Sermon on the Mount, p.96; Gleanings from Paul, p.290. On Owen, see Chapter II, Section A, below.

it has not been an easy task. After arriving at a definition and understanding of Hyper-Calvinism in doctrine and history, we investigated Pink's many writings and found that he was somewhat unique in his view of the Free Offer question.¹⁹ We found that in some places Pink clearly accepted the Free Offer doctrine, but in others he explicitly rejected it. It is not a case of the early Dispensational Pink versus the later Amillennial Pink, for his contradictory views are found in both periods and cover his entire literary career. His writings reveal instances in which he takes serious issue with those who limit human responsibility as per Hyper-Calvinism,²⁰ and events in his life bear this out. For example, Pink worked for a while with the Strict Baptists in Australia but eventually separated from them over the Free Offer issue.²¹ He had virtually no contact with the Primitive Baptists or the Protestant Reformed Church in the United States, while in Britain his association with the Strict and Gospel Standard Baptists was minimal. However, his growing ecclesiastical isolationism was a major factor in this pattern. He was aware of being called a 'Hyper' by others,²² but certainly not in the Antinomian sense.²³ Some would consider him a High Calvinist with Hyper tendencies, others a Hyper with moderation and reaction against the extreme writers. But one wonders if there is really much difference between these two opinions, especially given the distinctive nature of Pink's personality and historical setting.

19. There were three other earlier writers who were slightly similar to Pink in his position on the Free Offer but they mentioned it on only one or two occasions. James Haldane rejected the use of the term 'offer' in one place and therefore could be considered a Hyper-Calvinist. H.A. Long said that God gives an offer but we cannot, and in this he is unique. But Haldane's overall position seems more in keeping with High, not Hyper-Calvinism, whereas Long's is probably Hyper. Both are discussed in Chapter VIII. Dixon Burn might be in the same borderline position as well, but again we have little data to go by.

20. E.g., John, vol.II, p.287; Belcher, Born to Write, pp.60-61. See Chapter III.

21. See Belcher and Murray. Pink takes issue with the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith in Gleanings from the Scriptures, pp.266, 277.

22. E.g., Sovereignty of God, pp.7, 320.

23. "These Antinomians consider themselves to be towers of orthodoxy, valiant defenders of the truth, sounder in the faith than any other section of Christendom. Many of them wish to be regarded as strict Calvinists; but whatever else they may be, they are certainly not that, for Calvin himself taught and practised directly the contrary" (Gleanings from the Scriptures, p.271).

This concludes our brief historical introduction. The remainder of the work will be primarily theological. A comprehensive history of Hyper-Calvinism has yet to appear, though S.F. Paul's large Further History of the Gospel Standard Baptists covers the history of that branch fairly extensively, howbeit uncritically. Actually, there have been very few secondary works about Hyper-Calvinism. Peter Toon's efforts are the best that have appeared,²⁴ and his small monograph, The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity, 1689-1765 (1967) is an excellent summary of the history and theology of eighteenth century Hyper-Calvinism, with some helpful insights concerning the Puritans and later representatives. He has also produced several vital articles and other books which extend his discussion. Certainly the present work could not have assumed its present shape without the way being paved for it by Toon's work. It will be seen that we agree with Toon on almost every conclusion. Nevertheless ours has been an independent project.

Toon writes as one who has been raised within the tradition, while the present author is not, nor has ever been, a Hyper-Calvinist, though we have had some personal contact with those who are. Even so, our investigation will not be mainly a polemical treatise but an investigation and presentation from the sources. In the absence of many helpful secondary sources, we rely almost entirely upon the primary sources themselves. And this is the way it should be.²⁵ The work, then, will be a resumé of the theology of Hyper-Calvinism (rather similar to Heppe's Reformed Dogmatics Set Out From The Sources) and as such will be helpful to those who would be in agreement with the traditions discussed, as well as to those who would study the subject for whatever other reasons.

We have aimed at being encyclopaedic. There is an enormous amount of Hyper-Calvinist literature, far more than we anticipated at the outset

24. We have not found Seymour's university (Ph.D.) thesis on Gill to be nearly as helpful as Toon's book, which was originally also a university (M.Th.) thesis. Unlike Toon, Seymour does not display a full knowledge of the sources, much less does he adequately set the discussion in its full historical setting. Having said this, we must add that we have found some of Seymour's comments helpful, mostly as a second(or third) opinion with which to interact.

25. Our study would, we trust, have met with the approval of W.J. Styles, who pleaded, "Very earnestly would we ask our Christian brethren with whom we are at issue, if they deem it right to refer to our sentiments at all, to quote from our accredited publications, and not to make wild and unprovable allegations" (Guide, p.76).

of our research. We have therefore striven to provide a nearly exhaustive bibliography for any future students. However, in the light of the enormity of the materials, it is unlikely that another will attempt a work similar to our own. Others, on the other hand, will probably research particular issues raised therein. It is certain that those in agreement with the various denominations discussed (whether those of Gadsby's or Hoeksema's) will most likely disagree with many of our assessments; hence we are compelled to provide more than sufficient documentation, even to the point of being pedantic.

As noted previously, we have been compelled to pass over the bulk of the material contained in the Hyper-Calvinist magazines and journals.²⁶ This is not so much because of their rarity or because they have not all been available to the author, or would not be available to the reader (all of which are true), but because we have found that the greater part of them are irrelevant to our aims. That is, most of their articles are sermonic and 'Experimental' (we have, however, covered the sermons printed separately), and we have found that their theological content is minimal. And yet we have found important gems buried in them. Furthermore, many of these journals reprinted excerpts from older writers, some of whom were not Hyper-Calvinist, and many of these and more contemporary articles were unsigned. Their appearance in the journals did not necessarily mean that their authors were Hyper-Calvinist. And as any person familiar with the sources will acknowledge, the enormity of these periodicals almost equals the literary output of their writers in book and tract form.

Similarly, we are continually finding further sources of materials. Sometimes we find out about such-and-such a writer who has been unheard-of to us before, only to learn that some of his comments are helpful and some are not. Most likely we will discover such old 'worthies' long after this study is completed. And then we have found out that other writers whom we have considered as lying outside the scope of this investigation have in fact shown definite similarities with the Hyper tradition; some of them have proved to be Hyper-Calvinists themselves. But this sort of thing can go on ad infinitum if not ad

26. On Hyper-Calvinist magazines and journals, see the following: Toon, 'English Strict Baptists', pp.30-36; Rosemary Taylor, 'English Baptist Periodicals, 1790-1865', pp.50-82.

It will be obvious that John Gill is our main source. We have taken him as a point of departure for several reasons. First, his significance in the history of the tradition is unquestioned. Secondly, his works are far more scholarly and extensive than any of the others. Thirdly, almost all of his books are still in print and therefore accessible to our readers. That new copies of his books are still being read more than two hundred years after his death is no small comment on his importance. And yet a cursory glance at our work reveals that we have attempted to deal with all the others, mostly in footnotes.

Since the aim of this study is to arrive at a workable definition of 'Hyper-Calvinism' in terms of its theology and, to a lesser extent, its history, it is also vital to keep in mind that the Hyper river contains many cross-currents. The historical side of this has been hinted at in this Introduction, but the doctrinal network is far more complex. Moreover, as we have used Gill as a central point from which to discuss Hyperism, so we have used our investigation as a platform from which to make observations on several other important strains of Calvinism. Our own personal assessment, however, of the individuals and doctrines discussed will be kept to a minimum.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

A. SOURCES

Much can be learned about a writer's method by examining the sources he employs. Some sources are ones after which the author patterns his own style; others are ones against which he reacts or over-reacts. Especially important are those sources which the author himself applauds. Opposing views are often de-emphasized, sometimes because the author does not wish to give them further publicity, except in polemics when they are named and warned against. Some sources can be analysed if it can be ascertained that an author has, in fact, read them but for some reason has chosen not to mention them.

Several authors are singled out by Gill for special commendation. Sometimes he does not elsewhere make reference to them very often, but his high estimation of them often signals a regular consultation. Of these, Crisp is as highly esteemed as any. Gill referred to him often as "the Doctor"¹ and said that he was a man of "great piety and learning, of long standing and much usefulness in the church of Christ, whose name and memory will be dear and precious to the saints".² References to Crisp are sporadic and usually confined to the theological writings rather than the Commentary. Occasionally Gill disagreed with Crisp,³ but on the whole he saw himself as being in Crisp's tradition. Others

1. Gill, CAE, vol.I, p.vii note, and often. John Fletcher, the Arminian, speaks of him as "the good doctor" (e.g., Works, vol.I, p.164. Cf. vol.II, p.71), but this is ironic, masked praise. Fletcher is saying that Crisp himself lived a holy life but that his doctrinal Antinomianism opened the door to practical Antinomianism. See Chapter X. Gadsby is one who calls Crisp 'the Doctor' approvingly (e.g., Works, vol.I, p.29). Samuel Crisp is not to be confused with his father. Pink quotes Samuel approvingly (Reconciliation, p.69) but we do not recall his ever quoting Tobias. A brief 'Memoir' of Crisp appears in CAE, vol.I. Cf. Toon, 'Tobias Crisp'; DNB; etc.

2. Gill, S & T, vol.I, p.81. A similar high praise comes unexpectedly from Spurgeon: "never was there a sounder divine than Crisp, and never one who preached the gospel more fully to all under the heaven" (Anecdotes and Stories, p.104. Cf. p.146).

3. E.g., CAE, vol.II, p.78 note.

also praised Crisp: Brine,⁴ Toplady,⁵ Keach,⁶ Elisha Cole,⁷ Twisse⁸ and others.⁹ It had always been dangerous to recommend Crisp, and few others so dared.¹⁰

Gill also highly praised Herman Witsius¹¹ as "learned"¹² and "celebrated".¹³ Witsius, a disciple of Cocceius, had moved to England and helped introduce English divines to Dutch Federalism and mediated in the Neonomian Controversy.¹⁴ His main work, The Economy of the Covenants, was a standard statement of Federalism and was especially popular with the Hyper-Calvinists. Gill had read it in Latin early in life, possibly even in his teen years,¹⁵ and together with Brine signed the prefatory epistle for the 1763 English translation.¹⁶ As Gill referred to Witsius regularly in his Body, so he also often referred to Cocceius in his Commentary with regard to theological and philological matters.

4. Brine, Remarks, p.16.

5. Toplady, Works, vol.III, p.223 note.

6. Keach, Marrow, pp.i-ii.

7. Quoted on the title page of CAE, vol.I.

8. Twisse said that he "had read Dr. Crisp's sermons, and could give no reason why they were opposed; but because so many were converted by his ministry, and so few by ours" (Quoted in Benjamin Brook, The Lives of the Puritans, vol.II, p.473). Remember that Twisse was at one time the Moderator of the anti-Antinomian Westminster Assembly. Eyre (Justification) attempted to show how Twisse and Crisp taught the same thing. See also Samuel Crisp, Christ Made Sin, p.6.

9. E.g., S.E. Pierce, True Outline, p.81; Styles, Guide, pp.55-56; Wilks, pp.4-5. Triggs wrote six sermons named Christ Alone Exalted.

10. The twelve who signed the Preface to the 1690 reprint of CAE later said that they were only vouching for the accuracy of the reprint's contents, not necessarily approving of the contents. They were: George Griffith, George Cokryn, Isaac Chauncey, John Howe, Vincent Alsop, Nathaniel Mather, Hanserd Knollys, Thomas Powell, John Turner, Richard Bures, and John Gammon.

11. Cf. Seymour, pp.52-58.

12. Body, p.924; Preface to Comm, vol.V, p.ii, and often.

13. Preface to Comm, vol.V, p.iii, and often. Also "the judicious professor" (CAE, vol.I, p.16 note), "the famous Witsius" (CAE, vol.I, p.86 note), "that excellent writer" (CAE, vol.I, p.90 note), and "the learned and judicious Witsius" (CAE, vol.I, p.235 note). He was also praised by Philpot, Letters, p.261; and J.C. Ryland, Sr., who calls him "that prince of all divines" (Contemplations, vol.I, p.187. Cf. pp.373-375, 409).

14. See his Conciliatory, or Irenical Animadversions, On the Controversies Agitated in Britain, Under the Unhappy Name of Antinomians and Neonomians.

15. So Kirkby, p.192.

16. Nuttall, 'Northamptonshire', p.121; Witsius, Economy, vol.I, p.iii; Apostles Creed, vol.I, p.11.

Together with "the learned Hoornbeck",¹⁷ these were the main Dutch influences. Indirect contact with Holland, however, came through William Ames. Referred to in the Commentary rarely,¹⁸ Ames was quoted more than anyone else in the Body. His Medulla Theologica (translated as The Marrow of Theology) was one of the most widely read books among the Puritans, and though its general format is different from Gill's Body, striking similarities exist in phrases and aims.

Twisse was one of the highest of the Calvinists of the Puritan era, and as such caught the interest of Gill. Twisse, "that famous Supralapsarian",¹⁹ was called in for support by Hyper-Calvinists from Davis onwards,²⁰ usually to prove that Supralapsarianism had been held by some of the most eminent Puritans. Owen was the most popular of the later Puritans. As we shall see later, The Death of Death in the Death of Christ by the "great and learned"²¹ Dr. Owen was the highest appeal on the question of limited atonement for Hyper-Calvinists. Nearly as popular was Thomas Goodwin,²² a strong influence also on Davis,²³ Hussey,²⁴ and Rippon.²⁵ Beza,²⁶ of course, was an important source.

17. Gill, DJ, p.42. Cf. Seymour, pp.51-58. So too Philpot, Letters, p.261; J.C. Rylands, Sr., Preceptor, p.323.

18. E.g., Comm on James 2:17 and a few other places. Ames was a favourite of others, such as Traill (Works, vol.I, pp.265, 280).

19. Gill, Cause, p.157. Cf. DJ, p.36; S & T', vol.I, p.66.

20. Cf. Davis, Truth and Innocency Vindicated, pp.10, 17, 21, 47, and often; Traill, Works, vol.I, pp.265, 280.

21. Gill, S & T', vol.III, p.128. Cf. ibid., p.131. Skepp (Divine Energy, p.6), Dell (Works, p.322), and Rippon (Manley Rippon, p.412) also liked Owen. Owen was sometimes referred to as "the Doctor" - e.g., by Button, (Remarks, p.8); and Philpot (Reviews, vol.II, pp.100, 172), who prefers Owen to Goodwin (Letters, p.382) and ranked him equal only to Huntington (ibid., pp.407-409). Pink spoke of Owen as "that prince of theologians among the Puritans ... Yea, far more candid and faithful was he than those hyper-Calvinists who profess to admire his teachings" (in Murray, Pink, p.249).

22. Gill: "...the great Goodwin, whose works I much value and esteem" (DJ, p.18) is called "an excellent divine" (DJ, p.25; Body, p.206, and often). So also Philpot (Eternal Sonship, p.87), Button (Remarks, pp.iii, 13, and often), Pink (Union, p.41), Craner (Manual, pp.15, 51), and especially S.E. Pierce, who considers Goodwin his favourite.

23. Davis, op. cit.

24. Hussey and Martin refer to Goodwin as: "the Doctor" (e.g., Preface to Glory; Thoughts, vol.I, p.156). Toon says Goodwin was the major influence on Hussey (HC, p.76). Through Hussey, Skepp also became interested in Goodwin and quotes him often. Goodwin, it will be noted, was an Independent and held views similar to Hussey's 'Eternal Humanity of Christ' (cf. Chapter V).

25. Manley, Rippon, p.412.

26. S & T', vol.I, p.247, and often. So also Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.322-323; J.C. Ryland, Sr., Preceptor, p.316.

Gill referred to Calvin²⁷ in his theological writings much less than one would have expected, though he is often there in the Commentary. Other theologians occasionally brought in include Zanchius,²⁸ Ridgely,²⁹ Maccovius, Luther and Turretin.³⁰

Sources are more apparent in the Commentary than elsewhere. "The very judicious and learned Dr. (John) Lightfoot"³¹ was recommended. "That great chronologer"³² and "holy man"³³ Bishop Ussher was regularly consulted and admired. Gill lists other favourite commentators:³⁴ Alcuin, Foliot, Mercerus, Cocceius, Sanctius, Brightman, Cotton, Patrick,³⁵ and especially "the incomparable Ainsworth" and "the excellent Durham".³⁶ Other favourites include Michaelis, Broughton (especially on Job), Montanus, Hammond, Pocock, De Dieu, Vitringa, Paginus, Schmidt, Vatablus, Drusius, Bochart, Cartwright, Munster,

27. Calvin is called "great" and "judicious" (S & T, vol.I, pp.210, 214). Calvin and Luther are predominant influences in Eaton and Bunyan. Calvin is praised by Pink (e.g., Interpretation, p.26), J.C. Ryland, Sr. (Preceptor, p.317), Philpot (Reviews, vol.I, pp.580-615). Wilks considers Calvin to be essential reading for all Calvinists, Low or otherwise (Wilks, p.113). Palmer recommends Calvin but adds that he was often wrong and not infallible (Free Enquiry, pp.9-10), while Stevens (Help, vol.I, p.214) and Samuel Turner (Arminianism, p.67) confess to never having read Calvin.

28. Gill: "...a man of as great learning and judgement, as any among the first reformers" (S & T, vol.I, p.266). Zanchius's Absolute Predestination was translated by Toplady, in whose Works it appears. Atherton said that Toplady translated it at age nineteen but did not publish it till later, having been encouraged to do so by Gill (Introduction to S.G.U. edition of Zanchius, p.10).

29. Gill, however, accused Ridgely of "absurdity and inconfidence" for rejecting the doctrine of eternal generation (S & T, vol.I, p.56). Cf. Chapter V below.

30. Gill debated at length with Turretin over the question of eternal justification. Cf. Chapter VI below. Otherwise he praised him as "a learned author" (DJ, p.72).

31. Gill, 'Dissertation on the Apocryphal Writings', in Comm, vol.VI, p.778. Similar high praises are peppered throughout the Commentary and Body.

32. Comm on II Cor. 12:2. Gill generally uses Ussher's chronology in his Comm. Ussher, incidentally, was a Low Calvinist.

33. Body, p.554. So too Hussey, Glory, p.480; and Philpot, Reviews, vol.II, pp.455-462.

34. Preface to Song.

35. Interestingly, Patrick was one of the Cambridge Platonists (New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, vol.II, p.366) and, even worse from Gill's perspective, a Latitudinarian Arminian.

36. There are dozens of others, but we mention the main ones here. This is not to say that other Hypers used these commentators, for very few did.

Buxtorf, and Junius and Tremellius. Not all of these were commentators and they were mentioned mostly on philological or historical matters. Gill never mentions the Critica Sacra anthology, though he expresses gratitude to Poole's Synopsis.³⁷

Possibly the author who had the most personal influence on Gill was John Skepp,³⁸ who wrote only one small book, Divine Energy. Gill knew Skepp "personally and intimately" and said "his memory is precious to me, as it is to many Christians".³⁹ He called him "a man of singular talents and abilities ... a warm and lively preacher of the gospel; a zealous defender of the special and peculiar doctrines of it".⁴⁰ Yet Skepp was rather unoriginal. He himself was taught personally by his former pastor, Joseph Hussey.⁴¹ Gill had probably met and heard Hussey in his youthful days in Northamptonshire. There are not many references to Hussey in Gill's writings,⁴² but Gill certainly was familiar with the entirety of Hussey's huge Glory of Christ⁴³ and probably his God's Operations of Grace, But No Offers of Grace. Of course, Gill would have ignored Hussey's earlier The Gospel-Feast since Hussey himself repudiated it before Gill was of an age to read it. Nonetheless, Gill calls him "a late valuable writer".⁴⁴ If Gill had thought more highly of Hussey he certainly would have mentioned him more often; since he does not, the influence cannot be as great as often supposed. For all his enumerated sources, Gill maintained a degree of originality. He undoubtedly had the intellectual capacity to handle critically the most serious questions of the day and make fresh contributions, a fact often minimized by recent critics. Brine, who also admired Hussey,⁴⁵ was not

37. Gill, however, considered that it was unnecessarily complicated in its quotations of writers and versions (Preface to Comm, vol.V, p.x).

38. So Seymour, p.56. In rejecting the 'offer' practice, Styles recommends Skepp's Divine Energy and Hussey's Operations (Guide, pp.57-60).

39. Gill, Recommendatory Preface to Skepp's Divine Energy, p.xii.

40. Ibid.

41. Seymour, p.51; Nuttall, op. cit., p.118.

42. As Comm on Psa. 107:30 and citations below. For a list of the writers whom Hussey admired, see Gospel-Feast, 'Epistle to the Reader', and the Index to Glory.

43. Cf. DJ, p.30; Trinity, p.181.

44. A man "of great piety and learning, of long standing and usefulness in the church of Christ" (S & T, vol.II, p.81). Cf. other Hyper-Calvinists who praised Hussey, e.g. Burn, The Great Religious Question, p.90; John Stevens, Doctrinal Antinomianism Refuted, p.115; Pink, Spiritual Union, pp.50-51.

45. Brine, Remarks, pp.16-19; Treatise, pp.447-448. Cf. Nuttall, op. cit., p.118. Abraham Taylor was just one of many who opposed Hussey (Taylor, An Address to Young Students in Divinity, p.14).

nearly as original or intellectually competent. Gill never appeals to Brine for authority, and only rarely to Skepp or Davis.⁴⁶

Gill ignored Edwards. No doubt he was something of an enigma to Gill: a strong Calvinist who supported active evangelism. Some of Edwards's works, it must be noted, were not immediately accessible in Britain for quite a while; but Gill would have had access to them in later days. There is a possibility that Edwards had read Gill's Cause of God and Truth.⁴⁷

Gill also ignored Isaac Watts except in a single place where he accuses him of Sabellianism for his unusual view of Eternal Generation.⁴⁸ Doddridge was mentioned but once as well, and even that single quotation is of minor doctrinal importance.⁴⁹ James Hervey was another well-known contemporary minister whom Gill mentions but once, but the reference is more favourable: "For this note I am indebted to my learned, pious, and ingenious friend, the Rev. Mr. Hervey".⁵⁰ Though Hervey recommended Gill's Song of Solomon,⁵¹ he was not as 'High' a Calvinist as Gill. He had been a member of Oxford's 'Holy Club', and that alone would have made him suspect. Most likely Gill and Hervey debated at length over the question of Evangelical Awakening.

References to Perkins are conspicuous by their scarcity. He was one of the most important of the early Puritans and was the link between Beza and Ames, both of whom are favourites of Gill. His relative absence must remain a mystery. Other important Puritans receive scant

46. Gill rarely mentions Davis except on eternal justification (DJ, p.49). Gill considered him "an excellent person" (Ibid.; cf. Preface to Davis, Hymns). Though Davis was in Northamptonshire, he died before Gill was of an age to have known him personally at any length. Cf. Glass, Early Years, pp.59, 143-144.

47. Cf. Edwards, Freedom of the Will, p.374 note. See Chapter VIII. Philpot reviewed Edwards in Reviews, vol.I, pp.247-269.

48. S & T¹, vol.I, p.563. The "Dr. Watts" mentioned in Body, p.3, was not Isaac Watts. Toplady, on the other hand, often quoted Watts (e.g., Works, vol.III, p.226). See Chapters V and VIII.

49. Quoted in CAE, vol.II, p.194 note.

50. Comm on Isa. 26:7 note. Cf. Rippon, p.xviii. Huntington also later appreciated Hervey (Works, vol.II, pp.40-41), as did Wilks (p.14).

51. Hervey, Theron and Aspasio, vol.III, p.145.

notice: Rutherford,⁵² Pemble,⁵³ Preston,⁵⁴ Manton,⁵⁵ Gataker,⁵⁶ and Flavel.⁵⁷ Yet we are not to suppose that Gill was not versed in the writings of the Puritans.⁵⁸ Quite the contrary is the case. He regularly consulted, but rarely mentions, certain popular commentators like Trapp,⁵⁹ Henry,⁶⁰ and the two well-known Arminians, Grotius⁶¹ and Bengel.⁶² Whitby, the arch-Arminian, is practically ignored in the Commentary; Baxter is only rarely mentioned;⁶³ Daniel Williams is never mentioned; Whiston the Socinian is only occasionally mentioned, and then only in historical matters.⁶⁴ Secular philosophers (as Locke, Descartes, Spinoza,⁶⁵ Hobbes⁶⁶) and theologians-cum-philosophers (Butler,⁶⁷ Berkeley, Newton,⁶⁸ Pascal⁶⁹) receive only a little mention in

52. There are a few passing references to Rutherford in DJ. It may be noted that Crisp was one of Rutherford's main opponents in his The Spiritual Antichrist.

53. "The judicious Pemble" (DJ, pp.37, 63).

54. Brine counted Preston a worthy author (Brine, Grace, Proved to Be at the Sovereign Disposal of God, p.22).

55. E.g. Cause, p.74.

56. Gataker is occasionally mentioned in the polemic writings (e.g., S & T', vol.II, p.307). Gataker had vigorously opposed Saltmarsh in Antinomianism Discovered and Confuted.

57. Flavel wrote against the Antinomians but, like Rutherford, did much to open the door to further extensions of High Calvinism.

58. On the Hyper-Calvinist appraisal of the Puritans, see Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.39-40; Philpot, Reviews, vol.II, pp.464-483; Pink, Godhead, p.202.

59. E.g., Comm on Pro. 30:1.

60. Henry is called "a very spiritual and affectionate commentator" (S & T', vol.I, p.483). Cf. Comm on Pro. 11:15; J.C. Ryland, Sr., Preceptor, p.324.

61. E.g., Comm on Gen. 4:4, 13:9, Ex. 20:10, and occasionally. This alone disproves Toon (HC, p.99), who felt that all those whom Gill quotes approvingly were Reformed, except Augustine.

62. E.g., S & T', vol.I, pp.540, 544; Comm on Micah 1:15. Gill may have been influenced by Bengel in setting a date for the fall of the Papal Antichrist (see Section I).

63. E.g., Body, p.204; Comm on Esther, Introduction. Strangely, Gill does not attempt to refute Baxter on Neonomianism, though Baxter's views are refuted. Once Gill argues a point from lesser-to-greater: as even "Mr. Baxter himself well argues" (DJ, p.60).

64. As Comm on Gen. 1:6; Body, pp.632, 666.

65. Mentioned in the Comm only on historical matters.

66. Mentioned in the Cause only as a representative of Deism.

67. Gill's arguments against Deism closely paralleled Butler's Analogy, which we shall discuss in Section E below.

68. Mentioned often in the Comm on the Pentateuch but usually only on historical matters.

69. Pascal would be ignored as a Papist. Gill and others almost never quote the Roman Catholics.

Gill, and how he dealt with their views will be discussed in Section E below.

Perhaps most striking is his failure to quote Crisp's fellow Antinomians more often than he does. Saltmarsh is rarely mentioned, as are Eaton, Towne, Dell and the others. There is a solitary reference to Cotton,⁷⁰ but none to Mrs. Hutchinson and few to the protagonists of the 1690's dispute, Chauncey in particular. Keach is spoken of here and there but, as we have said, Gill had split from the Keach-Stinton-Crosby tradition. Keach's influence can be found, however, in Gill's typology (see Section C below). The Marrow Controversy is likewise ignored, even though the same issues were debated there as in the various Antinomian controversies in England.

Gill is strangely silent on the most prominent and respected Baptist of the Puritan era: John Bunyan.⁷¹ To our knowledge Gill does not make a single, even indirect, reference to Bunyan. There can only be one reason for this silence. In his later years Bunyan held to universal atonement. Whether he held it in earlier days is not known, but he clearly espoused this position in Reprobation Asserted. This would clearly signal a serious compromise in Gill's eyes.

Lastly, we must mention the ancient sources. Gill's estimation of the Greek and Roman philosophers will be discussed later. As far as patristics are concerned, Gill highly valued the church fathers. He read all the major fathers and regularly appeals to them for the antiquity of a belief. His expertise in patristics is most evident in three works: A Dissertation on the Eternal Sonship of Christ; The Argument from Apostolic Tradition, in Favour of Infant-Baptism ... Considered; and The Cause of God and Truth. In Part IV of the Cause Gill quotes from no less than forty-five fathers of the first four centuries.⁷² He was

70. E.g., S & T², vol.III, p.25.

71. Also ignored are earlier Baptists (Hanserd Knollys, John Smythe) and those in the Anabaptist tradition (except Munster). Philpot said that Bunyan's Grace Abounding "deserves to be written in letters of gold" (Sermons, vol.IV, p.88). Other Hypers also praised Bunyan: J.C. Ryland, Sr., Preceptor, p.316; Gadsby, Sermons, p.13; Hawker, Memoir, p.66; and especially Pittman, Questions, p.88. J.H. Gosden wrote a biography.

72. Gill was probably familiar with the many lists of patristic quotations produced by those with whom he disagreed on the Five Points, such as Whitby, Grotius, and others. He was also probably familiar with Daille's A Treatise on the Right Use of the Fathers. Even though elsewhere Daille produces quotations on the extent of the atonement differing from Gill's, his work was ... Cont'd:

accused of mistranslation and quoting out of context by Henry Heywood in A Defence of Dr. Whitby's Treatise ... Against the Late Attempts of Mr. John Gill (1740).⁷³ Gill answered this in the next edition of the Cause.⁷⁴ Needless to say, Gill's favourite father was Augustine.⁷⁵

Of ancient sources, however, it was the rabbinics which most interested Gill. Gill, "very much a rabbi himself",⁷⁶ read all the main Hebraic writings in the original tongue and incorporated data from this immense task into his Commentary.⁷⁷ This was not altogether new at the time. Cocceius, Piscator and Ainsworth had often mentioned rabbinic writings in their commentaries. Three men in particular interested Gill in rabbinics. First was John Skepp.⁷⁸ Gill knew him personally and purchased his huge rabbinic library when he died. Then there was Buxtorf, whose grammar and lexicon were his first tools. His main influence, however, was John Lightfoot.⁷⁹ He was an Erastian Presbyterian but a very 'High' Calvinist and, as such, acceptable to Gill. His Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae New Testament commentary was the standard until Strack-Billerbeck, and it has not been entirely superseded. Others who interested Gill in rabbinics include Erasmus, Beza, Elsner, Bos, Wolfius, Raphelius, Broughton, Rhenferdus, Muhlius, Drusius, Grotius, Capelus, Cartwright and Wagenseil.⁸⁰ Wettstein, incidentally, used the same method but his annotated Greek New Testament was published too late (1752) for Gill to use in his Commentary.

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the standard at that time. Few other Hyper-Calvinists displayed an extensive knowledge of the Fathers, except Palmer (e.g., Baptismal Regeneration).

73. Heywood also translated Whitby's Treatise on Original Sin. On this controversy with Heywood, cf. Rippon, p.xxv.

74. Cause, pp.316-328.

75. As was Skepp's, who often quotes him in Divine Energy.

76. Griffith, A Pocket History of the Baptist Movement, p.105.

77. Cf. also his Dissertation Concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes and Song. It was for his use of rabbinics that he was awarded the honorary D.D. in 1748.

78. Rippon, p.xxxi; Iveney, vol.III, p.434; Wilson, vol.IV, p.216; Seymour, p.56.

79. "...from none have I had so much help and assistance as from the great Dr. Lightfoot, who has broke the ice for me, and pointed out the way in which I should proceed" (Preface to Comm, vol.VII, p.xviii).

80. Preface to Comm, vol.VII, pp.xv-xix.

Gill's Commentary still is of use to students today. In it are hundreds of rabbinic citations and references which are of interest in interpreting the Bible. Though his accuracy of translation and quotation has sometimes been challenged,⁸¹ Gill almost always supplies documentation for consultation and verification. His main sources include the Mishnah (curiously dated by Gill pre-100⁸²), the Targums (also dated pre-100 and possibly pre-Christian⁸³), both Talmuds (the Jerusalem Gemara dated c.100⁸⁴), the Midrashim, Apocrypha,⁸⁵ Pseudepigrapha, Pesikta, Zohar⁸⁶ (dated 2nd century but open to question!⁸⁷) and others. Occasionally he referred to the Koran⁸⁸ and other Eastern writings⁸⁹ but only with regard to historical or cultural matters and never for purposes of comparative religion. Medieval Jewish writers are also quoted, especially Maimonides, Rashi (called Jarchi), Ibn Ezra, Kimchi and Ben Melech, and also a few contemporary Jewish writers.⁹⁰

81. E.g., C.D. Ginsburg, Coholeth, pp.173-176, and (Anonymous), The Importance of Rabbinical Learning, Occasioned by The Rev. Mr. John Gill's Preface to His Learned Comment on the New Testament. But see 'A Lover of Humanity and A Friend to Learning', A Vindication of the Reverend Mr. John Gill, From the Cavils and Insults of An Ignorant and Impertinent Scribbler About the Importance of Rabbinical Learning.

82. S & T¹, vol.II, p.159.

83. Gill, Dissertation on Vowel-points, pp.214-217. Gill once erroneously said that the Targums were written in Greek (Comm on Gal. 3:24).

84. S & T¹, vol.II, p.159. Even in Gill's day the true late date of the Talmuds caused some to question their usefulness (as The Importance of Rabbinic Learning). Gill himself later accepted the 5th century date and admitted that they cannot be used to prove a point (Dissertation Concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes, p.1014).

85. Gill tended not to quote the Apocryphal books because they were accepted as canonical by Rome. At least thrice, however, he appeals to them for minor arguments: Wisdom 3:14 (Comm on Eph. 2:8), II Esdras 4:27 (Comm on I John 5:19); and I Maccabees (Body, p.17).

86. Often Gill tried to show that pre-Christian Jews accepted a form of Trinitarianism because of certain phrases in the Zohar (as in Comm on I John 5:7, itself a textually dubious verse!). The Supralapsarian Comrie felt that St. Paul referred to the Cabbalists (ABC of Faith, p.12). Pink totally rejected the Cabbala (Interpretation, p.97).

87. Preface to Comm, vol.VII, pp.xi-xii.

88. E.g., Comm on Gal. 4:25, I Thess. 4:17, James 2:23; Body, p.14. Both High and Hyper-Calvinists have sometimes been accused of borrowing their doctrine of divine sovereignty from Islam. Toplady denied it (Works, vol.III, p.223 note). See Chapter III below.

89. Confucius is mentioned in Comm on Job 19:25.

90. E.g., Comm on Numbers 24:17.

Gill entered the debate on the Massoretic vowel-points with A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-points and Accents (1767). Other Calvinists had written on the subject as well.⁹¹ Though not holding that the Massoretic text was fully authoritative,⁹² Gill considered that the vowel-sounds represented by the points were pre-Christian. In fact, he even considered the Hebrew language to be the world's oldest tongue – Adam and Christ (the second Adam) both spoke it⁹³ and Adam even invented the Hebrew alphabet!⁹⁴ Another curiosity is Gill's occasional practice of making a point or illustration from the marginal Ketib (spoken) reading of a text.⁹⁵ Because of his knowledge of rabbinics, Gill became interested in Kennicott's project of collating all the main manuscripts and rabbinic readings of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. He had used Kennicott's works already⁹⁶ and spoke highly of him ("a learned modern writer"⁹⁷). He wished Kennicott well upon hearing of the new project and volunteered his assistance.⁹⁸ Kennicott then asked him to collect and collate the Biblical passages quoted in the Mishnah, Talmuds and Midrashim, which Gill did within a fairly short period of time.⁹⁹ Gill had already read these sources and amassed a huge collection of notes, probably with an exhaustive Scripture index which he re-copied and sent to Kennicott.

Dr. Gill's use of rabbinics reveals several things about his methodology and theology. First, it shows how he was interested in meticulous detail. Secondly, his main interest was with Biblical exegesis. Thirdly, he probably became fascinated with typology through the rabbinic writings, especially the Targums and Midrashim.¹⁰⁰

91. As Thomas Boston, Tractatus Stigmologicus Hebraicus.

92. Dissertation on Vowel-points, pp.xxx-xxxi.

93. Ibid., pp.14-20 (Cf. Comm on Deut. 15:6).

94. Ibid., pp.44-46.

95. E.g., Comm on Pro. 17:27, Isa. 46:11, Ezek. 14:4, Psa. 59:10, 140:12.

96. Comm on Song of Solomon, Introduction.

97. Comm on II Sam. 5:8.

98. Dissertation on Vowel-points, p.xxx.

99. Rippon, xlii; Wilson, vol.IV, p.220; J.E. Ryland, 'John Gill', in Kitto's Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature, vol.II, p.133.

100. As we shall see in Section C below, Gill often accepted Targumic interpretations. Sometimes he further allegorized these Targumic allegories (as in Comm on Job 21:14). Yet he often rebuked the Jews for their fables and allegorical fancies (Comm on Ezek. 9:4, Gal. 4:24, and often),

Fourthly, he respected the Jews. He was aware of how they were persecuted and maligned,¹⁰¹ but never does he take Luther's stand against them. This parallels the way in which Gill saw himself as part of a persecuted minority. He was a conservative Christian at a time when Christianity was slandered and ridiculed by the intellectual elite (generally Deists); he was a Calvinist in the post-Puritan era; and he was a Baptist. Fifthly, there are distinct similarities between the anti-Gentile exclusiveness of Pharisaic Judaism and the 'no offers' non-evangelism of Hyper-Calvinism. (We shall consider this last point further in Chapter VIII.) And sixthly, like the rabbinic authors, Gill was not beyond accepting a few eccentric beliefs, such as the dating of the Zohar or some fanciful eschatological date-setting.

One last source must be mentioned and that is the field of symbolics. A few of the Independent Hyper-Calvinists subscribed to the Savoy Declaration,¹⁰² but not all. Some simply held to the Statements of Faith of their own local church.¹⁰³ What few Anglican Hypers there were subscribed very forcefully to the Thirty-nine Articles,¹⁰⁴ even if these Articles taught universal atonement (see Chapter IX). Toplady, though probably not of the non-offer persuasion, was respected for his defending the Calvinism of the Church of England against Wesley. As for the Baptists, some of them adhered to the Baptist Confession of 1689, to which we often refer in our investigation because it was a 'Baptized' Westminster Confession. But most Hyper-Calvinist Baptists have not adhered to this Confession because it teaches the free offer and Duty-Faith. Even so, they have had the highest respect for it, Savoy and Westminster.¹⁰⁵ Their theological writings are peppered with the language of these symbols. Gill wrote his Confession,¹⁰⁶ as did

101. Gill: "...it being common [now] to say, 'do you think I am a Jew?' [or] 'none but a Jew would have done such a thing'" (Comm on Deut. 28:37). Gill also often spoke of the continued Jewish hardness in rejecting Christ.

102. E.g., Bentley, Helper, p.28.

103. Such as those in the Irons tradition. We do not know which confession was used by Hussey and Huntington, but we suspect that it was not Savoy.

104. Even Philpot, who seceded from the Church of England, occasionally quotes from the Thirty-nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer (e.g., Meditations, vol.II, p.6; Sermons, vol.II, p.103).

105. E.g., Gill, S & T², vol.III, p.102; Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, p.291. Occasionally the Hyper-Calvinists have expressed disagreement with Westminster (e.g., Pink, Sanctification, p.114).

106. We have included this in an Appendix. Its similarity to other Reformed Confessions is obvious, but he is also original on some points.



Pierce¹⁰⁷ and a few others. Gadsby wrote a few Catechisms for children, as did Hawker and others, but these were not used as official church standards. The Gospel Standard Baptists' confessional 'standard' has been their Articles of Faith.¹⁰⁸ These Articles are imbalanced in the extreme. What other group would have specific paragraphs denying the free offer and Duty-Faith? Which other group would be so emphatic on the eternal generation of Christ contra Pre-Existerianism?¹⁰⁹ Consequently, these Articles have been elevated to a level of authority remarkably high for a group of Nonconformists who stress their independency of ecclesiastical structure.

Hoeksema's school, however, has surpassed even this. Hoeksema and his followers actually make little reference to symbols such as Westminster, Geneva, or the Helvetic Consensus, but they more than make up for this in their rigid adherence to three others, namely the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort and especially the Heidelberg Catechism.¹¹⁰ Homer Hoeksema has produced a massive exposition of the Canons of Dort, The Voice of Our Fathers.¹¹¹ He gives us much important information by way of background and exegesis comparing the Dutch, Latin and English, but the work is marred by polemics against the Remonstrants and Calvinists who believe in the free offer. He runs into special difficulties in his work. For instance, the Hoeksemas have always been emphatically Supralapsarian, while Dort is certainly Infralapsarian. The Canons also speak of 'offering', while the Hoeksema tradition rejects all offers. Both points are sources of embarrassment for them, and they try to get around them by either re-interpreting the Canons in such a way that makes Dort reject free offers, or they quibble about the fact that in teaching Infralapsarianism the Canons do not thereby rule out Supralapsarianism. Both attempts are clear cases

107. Miscellanies, pp.63-80.

108. We have also included these in an Appendix.

109. The Athanasian Creed emphasizes this as well but it is obvious that this Creed was never meant to be a balanced presentation of orthodox truths in the same way as the Apostles Creed or the Nicene Creed. Instead, it was written to combat a specific error, and we know of no church which has ever claimed it as their only confession.

110. See Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, pp.3-28, 332-345; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.31-44, 775.

111. The book is made up of short chapters originally published in The Standard Bearer, magazine of the Protestant Reformed Church. Engelsma denies that the Hoeksema school relies upon Reformed symbols too much (p.73), even though he refers to Dort as "that most holy Synod" (p.128).

of special pleading. It is amazing how the Hoeksema school could be so scathing in its denunciation of those in the Christian Reformed Church who taught free offers, when they themselves were not in agreement with the very standards to which they appealed to crush their opponents with. One can understand how Hoeksema could accuse certain ministers of inconsistency for their holding to universal atonement when the Canons do not, but he was so caught up in trying to root out Arminianism that he went further than the Canons themselves do on offers. And surely in teaching Infralapsarianism the Canons rejected Supralapsarianism.¹¹²

This state of affairs is hardly to be expected from a school which virtually elevates the Canons to canonical status equal with the Scriptures themselves. Note, for example, how Homer Hoeksema refers to the delegates at Dort as 'Fathers' - this sounds precariously like Romanism to some critics. From his perspective he is merely defending the confessional standards of his church, but to many others he appears to appeal to the Canons as sources of special authority. Even his exegesis of them parallels Scriptural interpretation. Of course, he says that "Creeds are not infallible; Scripture is. The Holy Scriptures, therefore, are the supreme court of appeal for our creeds".¹¹³ Yet, with the exception of the articles on Supralapsarianism, we do not know of any place where he specifies any errors in the Canons. And if the Canons are in error on Supralapsarianism, why does he subscribe to them?

The same state of affairs is seen in Herman Hoeksema's treatment of the Heidelberg Catechism. That he would preach once a Sunday on this Catechism for the majority of his long ministry surely indicates that he considered it more than just another helpful symbol of truth.¹¹⁴ These

112. It is interesting that one of the leaders of the anti-Remonstrants was a Supralapsarian - Francis Gomarus. Similarly, William Twisse was Supralapsarian as Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, but that body did not countenance his views either. In the same way, there were some at Dort who were advocates of Calvinistic universal atonement (such as Davenant), and also some of similar persuasion at Westminster. These differences are often overlooked by those who strenuously defend their confessional standards. On Supralapsarianism and Dort, see Chapter IV.

113. Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.775. As we will see in the next section, all Hyper-Calvinists have strenuously defended the infallibility of the Bible. We feel safe in asserting that they are in full accord with all the historic symbols and major Reformed writers, including Calvin, on this.

114. When his expositions were published, Hoeksema wrote that he had preached on the Catechism for over twenty-seven years (IK, vol.I, p.vii), while the publisher's notice to the recent

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sermons form the basis for his massive three-volumed The Triple Knowledge. But like his son with Dort, so the elder Hoeksema gets into difficulty with Heidelberg. For example, the Catechism clearly teaches universal atonement.¹¹⁵ The Hoeksemas vehemently reject this doctrine and so are forced to re-interpret the Catechism in such a way AS makes it Particularist. But this presents even further difficulties, for though the Dort Canons were the work of many delegates, the Heidelberg Catechism was the work of only two (Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus). And both authors wrote doctrinal summaries which expound the Catechism. If one were to exegete the Catechism according to the meaning intended by its authors (which is the duty of any exegete of any document), certainly these expositions would be of primary importance. And yet Hoeksema cannot do that. "When we insist on this we assume the stand that agreement with the Heidelberg Catechism does not necessarily always imply agreement with the meaning and interpretation of its authors."¹¹⁶ Consequently, he feels at liberty to disagree with Ursinus on the interpretation of a point - as if Hoeksema knew what the Catechism meant and Ursinus did not!¹¹⁷ And, as we shall see in Chapter IX, Ursinus believed in universal atonement and this is reflected in the Catechism in many places.

That Hoeksema is also guilty of placing the Heidelberg Catechism on a level nearly equal with Scripture is illustrated in another instance. He says that the doxology to the Lord's Prayer is not in the best biblical manuscripts, but he feels that it is still good to preach from this doxology because it is found in the Catechism.¹¹⁸ This almost sounds like Gill's drawing personal application from the exegesis of variant readings of biblical manuscripts. Why, it could even be interpreted that Hoeksema was placing the Catechism above the Bible;

Cont'd:...

publication of them states that this practice continued for the total of over fifty years.

115. See Chapter IX below.

116. IK, vol.I, p.331. One merely needs to imagine the application of this viewpoint to Scripture to observe its implications.

117. E.g., IK, vol.III, p.301.

118. IK, vol.III, pp.638-640. J.I. Packer, a recent High Calvinist, puts forth something similar in I Want to Be A Christian. On textual criticism, see Section B below.

the Biblical manuscripts do not contain this doxology but it is a true doctrine and should be in the Bible anyway(!).

We bring out this controversy concerning symbolics at the end of this section to illustrate a point. Hyper-Calvinists pride themselves on being in the pure line of Reformed truth. Their present position becomes the standard of interpreting all previous Calvinists, and if this means being inconsistent in praising and condemning certain ones at the same time, so be it.¹¹⁹ This is the way they deal with Calvin as well. As we shall see in our treatment of Calvin's rejection of limited atonement, many a High and Hyper-Calvinist has been forced to twist Calvin's words in order to make him fit what they feel he should have said. Many critics feel that this is the way that they deal with the Bible as well.

119. A particularly relevant example is the devastating manner in which Hyper-Calvinists pour scorn upon all who held to free offers - especially those of a Reformed persuasion - only to turn around and praise the same Calvinists who explicitly were pro-offer (e.g., those mentioned at the beginning of this section). Critics of Hyper-Calvinism sometimes point out this inconsistency; some even call it blatant hypocrisy.

B. LITERARY STYLE AND HERMENEUTICS

Gill's largest work was his huge Commentary. For all his theological writings he still considered Scripture central to all true theology. It is significant that he wrote his Body of Divinity after, not before, his Commentary.¹ Gill preached expositionally and incorporated his studies into his sermons.² It is a massive piece of literature and is probably the longest Biblical commentary ever written by a single author that covers every book of the Bible (those of Calvin and several others are longer but do not cover every Biblical book). Contrary to some evaluations,³ the Commentary does not cover every single verse.⁴ And it speaks much for the man that his Commentary is still in print after 200 years.⁵

The best description of it is Gill's own in the form of the full title:

An Exposition of the Old and New Testament; in which are recorded the origin of mankind, of the several nations of the world, and of the Jewish nation in particular: the lives of the patriarchs of Israel; the journey of that people from Egypt through the wilderness to the land of Canaan, and their settlement in that land; their laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial; their government and state under judges and kings; their several captivities; and their sacred books of

1. Cf. Seymour, pp.58, 154. Some writers (e.g., Button, Reply, p.72; Philpot, Eternal Sonship, pp.81, 83) refer to Gill's Body by Book and Chapter, but this is not the most practical method because the various editions differ in the arrangement of Books and Chapters, though not in content. We have therefore chosen to refer to the pagination of the single volume edition, which we feel is the most popular edition.

2. Rippon, p.lvi; Seymour, p.295. On Gill's preaching, see Chapter VIII. Hyper-Calvinists have often praised the Commentary, e.g. Philpot: "Of all commentaries Gill's is confessedly the best, but it is scarce and dear, and beyond the reach of most purses... There are many errata in both the Hebrew and Greek of the original editions" (Reviews, vol.I, pp.83, 85. Cf. p.303).

3. Such as Rippon, p.xxxviii; Seymour, p.287. Pink: "No man is competent to write on all the books of Scripture" (John, vol.III, p.335).

4. Because of the overlap of Biblical material Gill does not comment on all of the following: Ex. 36-40; Num. 1, 26, 29, 31, 33, 34; Deut. 5; II Kings 19, 20, 25; I Chron. 1-8, 10-21, 23-27; II Chron. 1, 3-10, 12, 18, 20-23, 25, 27, 28, 33, 35, 36; Ezra 2, 8, 10; Neh. 7, 12; Jer. 51; and a few locations in Mark and Luke.

5. Gill's Body, Song, Commentary, Cause and both editions of the Sermons and Tracts have been reprinted in recent years, often several times by different publishers. Seymour is clearly in error: "Perhaps the real test of a man's scholarly ability is the lasting quality of his work. Absolutely nothing from Gill's pen is known today" (p.294).

devotion: in the exposition of which it is attempted to give an account of the several books, and the writers of them; a summary of each chapter, and the genuine sense of every verse; and throughout the whole, the original text, and the versions of it, are inspected and compared; interpreters of the best note, both Jewish and Christian, consulted; difficult places at large explained; seeming contradictions reconciled, and various passages illustrated and confirmed by testimonies of writers, as well Gentile as Jewish.⁶

Gill was an apt linguist.⁷ He read the New Testament in Greek at the age of 10⁸ and Virgil in Latin at 9.⁹ He read all the main rabbinic sources in their original Hebrew. For the versions he regularly consulted Walton's Polyglot Bible¹⁰ and the Complutensian Polyglot,¹¹ rather than relying on Poole's Synopsis.¹² He shows in his quotations that he knew some Arabic,¹³ Syriac,¹⁴ Coptic,¹⁵ Gothic,¹⁶ and probably Ethiopic.¹⁷ His Commentary regularly translates into English all the major differences between the Greek/Hebrew originals and the versions; thus it still has a use for textual criticism on an elementary level. He

6. Title-page of Comm, vol.II.

7. This is sometimes exaggerated by some, as by Reed in his thesis on Gill, p.49. Most Hypers have been very deficient in knowledge of Biblical languages. Hoeksema and Philpot were notable exceptions. William Dell, an Antinomian who had much influence on the Hyper-Calvinists, knew Latin, Greek and Hebrew and recommended that they be taught to all children (Works, p.579).

8. Stennett, The Victorious Christian, p.31. Pink admits to knowing virtually no Greek, relying almost entirely upon the Authorized Version, the Revised Version, Young's Analytical Concordance and Bagster's Greek Interlinear New Testament (e.g., Paul, p.292; Interpretation, p.25; Letters, pp.26, 38; Hebrews, pp. 197, 275, 354, 470; John, vol.I, p.385; Belcher, Born to Write, pp.31-32). And yet Pink pretends to some knowledge, which is clearly extremely shallow, as when he claims that "The language spoken in the streets of modern Athens is identically the same, to its very accents, as that used by Plato and Socrates, yea, of Homer's Iliad, which was composed almost three thousand years ago ... and the Greek used by the Apostle Paul is heard in Salonica at this hour" (Reconciliation, p.114). According to Belcher (Born to Write, p.113), Pink's last words were, "The Scriptures explain themselves".

9. Rippon, pp.li-lii.

10. Preface to Comm, vol.VII, p.xix; 'Dissertation on the Apocryphal Writings', Comm, vol.VI, p.778.

11. Comm on Luke 9:23; Acts 14:10; Rom. 2:10, etc.

12. Preface to Comm, vol.V, p.x.

13. Comm on Job (4 times), Isaiah (12x), Jeremiah (5x), Lamentations (5x), Ezekiel (3x), Daniel (4x), etc.

14. Comm on Isaiah (3x), John (2x), etc.

15. Comm on Mark 6:20, 10:21; Luke 10-39. The Coptic version is not in Walton.

16. Comm on Mark 8:22. The Gothic version is also not in Walton.

17. Comm on Pro. 30:17.

also translates the major variants of Codices Alexandrinus and Bezae from the collations in Stephanus and Walton. Occasionally he gives an exposition of admittedly dubious readings,¹⁸ even as he does with variant readings.¹⁹ Incidentally, Gill for all his conservatism, was not above disagreeing with the Authorized Version at times.²⁰

Gill would list several interpretations of a passage and then gave the one he chose. For this, his work is a good collection of opinions and not too dissimilar to Poole's Synopsis. Yet it is certain that Gill did, in fact, exegete some passages according to a predetermined plan.²¹ This is seen, for example, in his use of literalism at times but rejection of it at other times. He rejects infant baptism because there are no explicit commands or examples for it in Scripture. (Hoeksema would reply that neither are there any explicit prohibitions). Yet on the subject of limited atonement he had to admit that there are no explicit verses that teach it. Indeed, he confesses that there are several verses which at first glance seem to teach universal atonement, but these must be re-interpreted to mean otherwise because of his doctrinal pre-suppositions.²²

18. E.g., Comm on Acts 19:7. Most Hyper-Calvinists have followed the Textus Receptus except Hoeksema, who rejected the T.R. on the doxology of the Lord's Prayer and on John 1:18 (IK, vol.I, p.379; vol.III, pp.638-640); while Pink did not consider textual criticism important (John, vol.II, p.9; Belcher, Born to Write, p.32).

19. E.g., Comm on Job 35:3, Song, 8:6, Gal. 3:11. Cf. Preface to Song.

20. E.g., Comm on II Cor. 8:1, Rom. 8:21, II Tim. 2:17; Body, p.950. So too Hoeksema, Good Pleasure, p.359; IK, vol.II, p.408. Gill felt that only the original languages were inspired, not the Authorized Version or other translations (Body, p.13). Styles often quotes from the Revised Version. Pink made the occasional reference as well though it is the Authorized Version to which he makes almost all his references (even in his commentaries). Windridge: "Each new translation of the Bible is more erroneous than the last" (p.274). Many Hyper-Calvinists have supported the Trinitarian Bible Society, often because in recent years it has taken the 'AV only' position (though not always: E.W. Bullinger, one of its Secretaries, felt that this translation was in need of revision). The T.B.S. was supported by Popham (Gosden, Memoirs, p.208) and Pink (Murray, Pink, p.59). Many Hypers defend the AV because it is "the Puritans' Bible" (sic), but they would be surprised to learn that most Puritans used the Geneva Bible, which was even more 'Calvinistic'. On the AV, see Philpot, Meditations, vol.II, pp.13, 42; vol.III, pp.12, 28, 34, 80; Answers, pp.119-123; Sermons, vol.II, p.87; vol.VIII, p.102; Popham, Counsel, p.60; Windridge, pp.258-259. The Hyper-Calvinist position is best summed up by Pink: "we have sufficient confidence in the superintending providence of God to be satisfied the translators of our authorized version were preserved from any serious mistake on a subject [Christ's incarnation] so vitally important" (Godhead, p.143).

21. So Clipsham, p.102. Two Hyper-Calvinists have written books on Biblical interpretation: Pink, Interpretation of the Scriptures; and Palmer, Principles of Scripture Interpretation.

22. Body, p.467. Cf. Seymour, pp.199, 201; Owen, Works, vol.X, p.369. See Chapter IX.

Dr. Gill held a very high view of Scripture. The Bible was "dictated by the inspiration of the spirit of God".²³ So he usually preferred to use Biblical terminology rather than speculative vocabulary. In a theological tract, for instance, he would define or describe something in Biblical phrases, though often in the passages themselves there is not the slightest hint of what he is teaching. He often resorts to a very irregular form of proof-texting.²⁴ Then there is the use of the phrases 'the Covenant of Grace' and 'Covenant of Works', neither of which are found in Scripture. Gill even goes so far as to rebuke a writer for "a wretched perversion of several passages of scripture, in which no mention is made of the covenant of grace".²⁵ Inference, then, must be used in order to employ these terms.²⁶ As Gill himself says, "Words and phrases though not literally expressed in scripture, yet if what is meant by them is to be found there, they may be lawfully made use of; as ... Trinity ... essence ... generation ... imputation ... satisfaction ..."²⁷ Yet Gill can also sound the warning that "there is oftentimes a good deal of truth in that saying ... he that coins new words, coins new doctrines".²⁸ As we shall see later, understanding this hermeneutical tension is imperative for understanding why Hyper-Calvinists reject an 'offer' of the Gospel. Moreover, Arminians are quick to point out that 'freewill' is indeed a popular Bible term.

23. Comm on I Kings 4:32. Cf. Body, pp.12, 14. So too Popham, Counsel, pp.52-53; Pink, Profiting, p. 19; Philpot, Meditations, vol.III, p.92; J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.I, p.201. Though Calvin's views may be different on this point, he did not teach the Neo-orthodox view that the Bible merely contains but is not the same as the Word of God. Popham: "A container is different from what it contains" (Counsel, p.31). On Gill's doctrine of inspiration, see Bush and Nettles, Baptists and the Bible, pp.104-109. On inspiration from the Hyper-Calvinist viewpoint, see Body, pp.11-25; Popham, Counsel, pp.28-60; and Pink's four books: The Divine Inspiration of the Bible; The Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures; The Doctrine of Revelation; and Interpretation of the Scriptures.

24. Cf. Fletcher, Works, vol.IV, pp.360-362; vol.V, pp.14-20, 360-377; Crow, John Wesley's Conflict with Antinomianism, p.288.

25. S & T, vol.II, p.438.

26. Kevan on the Puritans: "It was mostly admitted that the existence of this Covenant with Adam was nowhere explicitly stated in Scripture, and therefore it was to be accepted by inference" (The Grace of Law, p.111). Cf. Body, p.368; Westminster Confession, I, 6; Savoy, I, 6; Baptist of 1689, I, 6.

27. Body, Introduction, p.xxix. So too Philpot, Eternal Sonship, pp.50, 86-87; Styles, Guide, p.25; Hawker, Works, vol.IX, p.441; Pink, The Divine Covenants, p.29; Homer Hoeksema, in Hanko et al, p.51.

28. Body, Introduction, p.xxix.

This is not to say that Gill thought all Scripture was equally clear. Nor was he reluctant to supply the verses which he thought proved an assertion. His Body of Divinity is a veritable catalogue of Scriptures collated according to a theological outline. In the Scripture index of the Body which we prepared for this study, it is obvious that Gill refers to the Scriptures not only frequently but also systematically. His favourite verse is Eph. 1:4 (referred to 57 times), followed by Eph. 1:3 (37 times), II Tim. 1:9 (30x), Romans 8:33 (24x), II Thess. 2:13 (25x), Romans 8:30 (24x), Eph. 1:7 and Isa. 9:6 (both 25x), and Romans 3:25, Gal. 4:4, Heb. 1:3, and I Peter 1:3 (all 21x). This reveals his preference for 'Calvinistic' (sovereignty) verses, while the 'Arminian' (responsibility) verses are rarely mentioned. Crisp's favourite texts were II Cor. 5:19 & 21 and Isa. 53:6, but he wrote comparatively little; while R.T. Kendall says that II Peter 1:10 (in Gill's Body only 5 times) was "the biblical banner for the Perkins tradition".²⁹

It is apparent that Gill is very defensive in his writings. There are, moreover, very few references to himself or contemporary events in his writings; nor are there many contemporary applications or illustrations. One might expect such a scholarly approach in the Commentary or Body or Cause, but even the printed sermons which he preached reveal a certain coldness and dryness. Certainly the works of Crisp, Saltmarsh and even Skepp contain vitality and devotion. Only the Song contains any real devotional material. Perhaps if we had any of his letters, journals or such we might better evaluate his personality. On the other hand, Gill does not assume the feigned humility of Hussey, who described himself as "a poor despised servant of Jesus Christ" on the title-page of The Glory of Christ. Occasionally, though, one finds some rather ironically proud statements like the one describing his arguments: "which I will not say are unanswerable, though I think they are".³⁰ Only a few occasions do we find him expressing emotions, as in his sermons at the funerals of his daughter and wife,³¹ and a few repeated exclamations.³² And unlike Spurgeon, use of humour is

29. Kendall, Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649, p.8. On the so-called 'Arminian texts', see Warburton, Gospel, p.124.

30. S & T¹, vol.III, p.101.

31. S & T¹, vol.I, pp.391-408, 566-578.

32. E.g., Comm on Pro. 3:22; Isa. 52:7, 54:5, 66:11; Phil. 2:7, etc. The nineteenth-century Hyper-Calvinists, however, tended to be 'Experimental preachers' (sic) and the difference is noticeable. See Chapter X.

rare, if not non-existent.³³ On the strength of Gill's writings, it is quite incomprehensible how one biographer could record that Gill had "quite a sense of humour, and often expressed himself with rugged wit".³⁴ Though he admitted that "Religion does not strip us of our affections, or destroy them, but regulates and directs to the proper use of them",³⁵ he warned against undue emotional expression.³⁶ As we shall see later, this springs from a root closely related to Stoic 'apatheia'.

He wrote in extremely long sentences which were hard to follow, but his fleeting flow of thought within them makes for easy citation. Words were chosen carefully. This is in marked contrast with Crisp, who has regularly been criticized for using unguarded phrases,³⁷ possibly for shock value. Similar criticisms have been levelled against Davis,³⁸ Skepp³⁹ and Gadsby.⁴⁰ Crisp, Davis and Skepp used literary styles which are easy to follow. Saltmarsh followed Ames in using a structure with many maxims and definitive sentences in an often disconnected fashion. Huntington and Gadsby are often difficult to follow, while the style of Hussey is a grammarian's nightmare.⁴¹ Gill was always

33. Toplady records a unique humorous incident in Works, vol.IV, p.166. Rippon and others record examples of Gill's sarcasm.

34. Light, Bunhill Fields, p.127.

35. S & T¹, vol.I, pp.29, 487.

36. S & T¹, vol.I, p.491.

37. E.g., Gill, CAE, vol.I, p.29n, 202n, 271n; vol.II, pp.119n, 120n; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.29; Traill, Works, vol.I, p.261; Stoughton, History, vol.II, pp.347-348; Rippon, p.xxxvi; Kevan, p.32; Brook, Lives, vol.II, p.473; DNB, vol.13, p.99; R.T. Jones, p.115; Buck, A Theological Dictionary, p.220. Crisp himself admitted that he was often misunderstood (CAE, vol.I, p.29). Cf. MacLeod, Scottish Theology, p.157, for the same criticism of the Marrow of Modern Divinity. See also Chapter X below.

38. Toon, PC, p.103; R.T. Jones, p.115.

39. Clipsham, p.101.

40. DNB, vol.10, p.348.

41. So, for instance, Abraham Taylor, Address to Students, p.14. Hussey confesses that "The Phraseology will be thought by many to be too mean and illiterate, and the Style too loose and popular... A rugged, unpolite Phrase, will stick more on some minds, and to better purpose, than smoother eloquence..." ('Epistle to the Reader', The Gospel-Feast). For studying his Glory, the topical included is virtually essential. Furthermore, Hussey said that his method was synthetical rather than analytical and employed "coherence ... the analogy of faith ... the homogenous acceptance of the Word". (Glory, pp.793, 797, 860). Hussey's style is not to be confused with Crisp's even though he greatly admired Crisp. No other Hyper-Calvinist we have read is as difficult to follow as Hussey, while Pink's style has earned him nearly universal praise even from his critics for clarity and readability. Note the title of Belcher's biography: Arthur W. Pink: Born to Write.

structured and systematic,⁴² usually analytical,⁴³ sometimes chronological, occasionally hypothetical,⁴⁴ and nearly always polemical.⁴⁵ He tended to be absolutist in grammar and preferred superlatives to comparatives. He never used extended allegory like Bunyan, nor imaginary dialogue like Bourn, Keach, or Gadsby,⁴⁶ nor rhetorical question-and-answers like Crisp. In the Cause, however, he takes a semi-Thomistic approach in dealing with each of Whitby's arguments and counter-argument. He is fond of treating a subject in a descending order from God (Father, Son, Spirit) to angels (elect, non-elect) to man (elect, non-elect).⁴⁷ His use of logic will be discussed below. Finally, he often used tautology⁴⁸ (though he denied its validity⁴⁹), hyperbole,⁵⁰ metonymy⁵¹ (a favourite of Ames⁵²), irony⁵³ and frequent alliteration.⁵⁴ Above all, his favourite was allegory.

42. Rippon, p.xlvi; Robison, PB, pp.35-36; 'Legacy', pp.111-112; Harrison, p.12. See Section E below.

43. Seymour, p.292. Hoeksema describes his own as the "exegetical-synthetical method" (Reformed Dogmatic, p.11). When, therefore, he condemned 'synthesis theology' (Therefore, pp.233-236) he is speaking of Neo-orthodox dialectical theology, for Hoeksema's career paralleled almost to the year the careers of Barth and Brunner.

44. E.g., Cause, p.155.

45. See Seymour, p.69.

46. Bourn, A Dialogue Between a Baptist and a Churchman; Keach, Marrow; Gadsby, 'The Present State of Religion', in Works, vol.I, pp.43-95. The Marrow of Modern Divinity and many others also used this style.

47. E.g., S & T¹, vol.III, pp.104ff; Cause, pp.197-198; and often in Body.

48. E.g., Comm on I Cor. 11:27. Cf. Hoeksema, TK, vol.I, pp.443-444.

49. Cause, p.110; Comm on Rom. 5:2; S & T¹, vol.II, p.467. Hussey used tautology to an extreme, even though he himself was aware that it subjected him to criticism which would not be (from his perspective) entirely just. See 'The Epistle to the Reader' and 'Errata' to his Gospel-Feast.

50. E.g., Comm on Ex. 10:15; Isa. 30:26, 37:25; I Cor. 5:10; Jer. 8:16, etc.

51. E.g., Body, p.915.

52. Ames, The Marrow of Theology, pp.79, 81, 100, 108, 213, 227, 246. Cf. John Eusden's Introduction to Ames's Marrow, p.41.

53. E.g., Comm on I Cor. 4:10.

53. Especially with words beginning with 'p' (e.g., Body, pp.314, 890; Comm on Psa. 78:21, 139:5, 140:11) and 'g' (see Chapter XI, Grace, below).

C. ALLEGORY

The frequent use of allegorical hermeneutics dates from early in the Church's history. Among the fathers it flourished most in the Alexandrian School, in such fathers as Origen and Clement. Scholars usually trace its popularity there to Philo. As time passed and Biblical interpretation ebbed in the Middle Ages, allegorizing also subsided but reappeared again in Aquinas. In Aquinas we find the curious combination of Aristotelian logic and what would seem to be a very non-Aristotelian allegorizing. With the Reformation the emphasis on Aristotle subsided, but Luther held firmly to allegory as the means of 'finding Christ in the Old Testament'. Calvin, however, minimized the use of allegory and retained only a small degree of typology.¹ In England the Puritans employed allegorical hermeneutics, often in drawing picturesque parallels between Biblical persons and contemporary political figures.² Relevant to the history of Hyper-Calvinism, we can see allegory in Ames,³ Lightfoot,⁴ Saltmarsh,⁵ Crisp,⁶ Vitringa,⁷ Owen,⁸ Keach,⁹ Fisher's Marrow of Modern Divinity,¹⁰ Hussey¹¹ (though he denied allegorical hermeneutics¹²), and Skepp.¹³

1. Cf. Calvin, Commentary on Zachariah 6:1-3; Jansen, Calvin's Doctrine of the Work of Christ, pp.62-69.

2. See especially Polizotto, Types and Typology: An Investigation of Puritan Hermeneutics.

3. Ames frequently spoke of 'types of Christ' which Scripture itself does not specify as types. Eusden, however, denies typology in Ames (Eusden, p.55).

4. Gill refers to one of Lightfoot's allegories in Comm on I Kings 6:23. See also Lightfoot's history of the Old Testament.

5. Free Grace, pp.166ff.

6. Crisp, CAE, vol.II, p.193.

7. Gill relied heavily on Vitringa's allegorizing the Prophets (Preface to Comm, vol.V, p.viii).

8. Owen: "We argue from the type to the antitype, or the thing signified by it" (Works, vol.X, p.257; cf. pp.250-258). See his massive Commentary on Hebrews for illustrations of using antitypes to find and argue from the types.

9. Cf. Keach, Tropologia and Exposition of the Parables. Keach's Tropologia is reviewed by Philpot in Reviews, vol.II, pp.67-75.

10. Marrow of Modern Divinity, pp.47, 69, 84.

11. Hussey, Glory, pp.129-130, 739-740, 891-903. Cf. Gill, S & T¹, vol.I, pp.186-187.

12. Hussey, Glory, p.129; cf. Toon, HC, p.79.

13. Skepp, p.16.

Keach made typology a systematic science in his huge Tropologia. Gill probably owed more to this work than to any other specific treatise on typology, though he never once mentions it. It is still the definitive piece on the subject, is still in print¹⁴ and is as large a compendium of Biblical allegories as one is ever likely to find. It also scientifically investigates the use of idiom and assorted figures of speech in the Bible, and in this it is equalled only by E.W. Bullinger's huge Figures of Speech Used in the Bible. Gill never wrote a piece on typology or idioms, but his Commentary shows much study in the field and a continued use of allegorical interpretation.

Such is the history of Christian allegorization. Jewish allegorization, however, precedes and exceeds that of the Church. Philo was perhaps the greatest Jewish exponent of allegory. Yet later rabbinic sources do not often mention him or his allegories, probably because of his Hellenizing. Gill relied heavily on Philo.¹⁵ It is still debated whether the various Targums are pre-Christian. The Targum on Job and Genesis Apocryphon, both among the Dead Sea Scrolls, seem to indicate so (unless G.R. Driver is correct in dating them in the Christian era). Philo bears traces of, Targumic influence (or at least interpretative parallels), especially in the Logos-Memra motif. The Targums were mildly allegorical paraphrases and formed the link between translation and Midrash, which was the next form of Jewish interpretative literature. Targums and Midrashim both continued to be written for a millenium hence and are the main representatives of Haggadah ('exegetic') literature, together with the Mekilta, Sifre and Pesikta. Halachah ('legal') literature also contains Jewish allegory but often tends to be more legendary and mythical. As Aquinas signalled a return to Christian allegory, Maimonides and Nachmanides re-introduced Jewish allegory. The other major Jewish Commentators (Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Sforino) included some allegorical elements, but by and large they resisted the fanciful tendency and concentrated more on grammatical and literary questions. Gill regularly refers to each of them. Then there is the anonymous Zohar, which we have already mentioned. The Zohar was the chief work of the medieval Jewish Caballists and extends far beyond allegory into quasi-mysticism bordering on the occult. Gill regularly referred to it in his allegorization.

14. Reprinted under the title Preaching from the Types and Metaphors of the Bible.

15. Preface to Comm, vol.VII, p.xiv.

Gill did not go as far as the Jewish allegorists - certainly not the Zohar - and rebukes their frequent "fables ... which are not worthy of any notice",¹⁶ though he does in fact often record some of these fables. Keach did not use the rabbinic sources very much. In his allegorizing, Gill revealed a mind which was influenced by Hebrew thought patterns far more than were most of his Protestant predecessors or contemporaries.

Some¹⁷ make a sharp distinction between allegory and typology, but to others the differences are more quantitative than qualitative. Gill defines Biblical allegory:

An allegory is a way of speaking in which one thing is expressed by another, and is a continued metaphor ... these things point at some other things; have another meaning in them, a mystical and spiritual one, besides the literal; and which the Jews call Midrash, a name they give to the mystical and allegorical sense of Scripture, in which they greatly indulge themselves. An allegory is properly a fictitious way of speaking; but here it designs an accommodation of a real history, and matter of fact, to other cases and things, and seems to intend a type or figure.¹⁸

Thus at the basis of allegory is that "there are several genuine senses of one and the same Scripture".¹⁹ How does this compare with the doctrine regarding Biblical perpetuity? The Confessions of Westminster, Savoy and 1689 all agreed verbatim that "All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all",²⁰ but also agree verbatim that "the true and full sense of any Scripture ... is not

16. Comm on Ex. 13:19. Cf. Comm on Gen. 9:19, 15:7, 15:19, 17:26; I Cor. 1:20; Gal. 4:24, etc. Crisp: misuse of allegorization does not nullify the true principle (in Samuel Crisp, Christ Made Sin, p.182).

17. As Jansen, pp.65-66.

18. Comm on Gal. 4:24. On the definition of 'type', cf. Philpot, Sermons, vol.I, p.17; Hawker, Works, vol.VI, p.406; vol.IV, p.125; Tryon, Memento, p.342; and Popham, Counsel, pp.9-24, in which he defines typology as "prophecy by figure" (p.22). On typology and allegory, see: Cozens, Typography and Thought-Book; Huntington, A Key to the Hieroglyphical Print of the Church of God; Allen, Spiritual Magazine, vol.I, and A Spiritual Exposition of the Old and New Testament; Pink, Covenants, pp.307-317; Atonement, pp.266-277; Revelation, pp.123-127. Pink's typology is apparent in his Old Testament expositions.

19. This was Rehokosht's charge against Davis (Rehokosht, p.12), which Davis partly admitted (Davis, Truth and Innocency Vindicated, pp.20-21). Pittman denies the principle (Questions, p.60).

20. Westminster, I:7; Savoy, I:7; 1689, I:7. Popham says that though there are many mysteries in Scripture, all Scripture is nevertheless exegetible and not vague (Counsel, p.36. Cf. p.47).

manifold, but one".²¹ Gill admits the former but not the latter and sees allegory as the answer for both. Allegory is needed for understanding the difficult passages, while it also provides the deeper meaning of even the clear verses. Sometimes Gill unexpectedly says that "the literal sense is best",²² but this is usually in rejecting some Jewish fable or such; at other places Gill says "the mystical sense is best";²³ and at still other places, "The words may be considered in a figurative as well as a literal sense".²⁴ Though he can distinguish three senses of a passage ("natural and literal ... civil ... and a spiritual and religious sense"²⁵), generally he prefers the simple dichotomy.

First there is the plain sense, also called the literal, proper, corporeal, simple, grammatic, absolute and strict.²⁶ "Wrapped up in"²⁷ this is the allegorical, also called the mystical, improper, symbolic, spiritual, metaphorical, figurative, evangelical, subtle, typical, parabolic, hieroglyphic, enigmatic, metonymical, emblematic, analogical, representative and mysterious.²⁸ One greatly errs in taking something literal which is allegorical,²⁹ though the "literal sense is not to be departed from without necessity".³⁰ At times Gill and those of his school

21. Westminster, I:9; Savoy, I:9; 1689, I:9.

22. Comm on Pro. 3:20, I Sam. 28:8. Cf. Philpot, Eternal Sonship, pp.18, 66; Memoir of Gadsby, p.99.

23. Comm on Joel 3:18. Cf. Comm on Num. 11:29; Philpot, Sermons, vol.II, p.69.

24. Comm on Pro. 20:12. Cf. Preface to Comm, vol.V, p.viii. Philpot says there is in every Scripture two meanings (literal and spiritual), and there is always some analogy between them, with "the spiritual interpretation being based upon the literal". They err who ignore either (Sermons, vol.III, p.103-104).

25. Comm on Pro. 20:24.

26. E.g., Comm on Lev. 16:2, John 13:8; Preface to Comm, vol.V, pp.viii, x; Comm on Lev. 16:2; Preface to Comm, vol.V, p.ix; Comm on Num. 11:29, Matt. 1:22.

27. Preface to Comm, vol.V, p.ix.

28. E.g., Comm on Gal. 4:31, 4:29; S & T, vol.II, p.449; Comm on Gen. 17:4, Eph. 4:5, Ex. 27:16, Gen. 17:8, Lev. 16:2; Body, Introduction, p.xxxiii; Cause, p.17; Comm on Isa. 11:6, Rom. 9:11, Gen. 8:8, Ex. 20:11, 26:34, 21:6, Rev. 17:5. Philpot equates the 'deeper sense' with 'a spiritual and experimental interpretation' (Sermons, vol.III, p.78) and contrasts the literal with the experimental sense (vol.V, p.67; vol.VII, p.43). He also contrasts the 'actual, literal' with 'the mystical representation', which is similar to the actual-virtual scheme (vol.IV, p.80; Cf. Chapter X for 'Experimentalism'); and he differentiates the 'moral and literal instruction' from the 'spiritual interpretation' (vol.V, p.20), and the 'prospective and prophetic' from the 'experimental' (vol.VIII, p.102). Hoeksema contrasts 'a figure of speech' from 'the literal sense of the word' (IK, vol.I, p.647).

29. Preface to Comm, vol.V, p.x. Pink warns of "a slavish literalism" form of interpretation, such as Dispensationalism (Perseverance, p.81).

30. Quoted in Seymour, p.201. Compare Philpot: "We should not strain figurative expressions too ... Cont'd:

seem to "dwell on the figurative language of Scripture, which they apply in the most literal sense".³¹

At times it seems that he considered the allegorical to be the more important of the two. This occasionally seems to be the implication of the use of terms like 'spiritual' and 'evangelic', implying that the literal sense may be unspiritual or non-evangelic. He uses these terms a bit loosely. Keach catalogued his typology according to precise and accepted categories, sometimes in Latin. Gill's unscientific terminology shows that he tried to stay in the mystical tradition, but the unemotional approach he takes indicates that this was still something of an academic interest. One might say that he tried to merge the vocabulary of mysticism with the method of logic.

He admitted that "symbolical or allegorical divinity is not argumentative",³² that is, one cannot prove an assertion merely on the basis of an allegory. Yet Gill regularly does just that. This seems to be glaringly inconsistent. Instead of admitting to inconsistency he would say that human reason can see it only as inconsistency while it is really the spiritual nature of revelation. To the charge that it is a cloak under which Gill himself injects his own beliefs into Scripture, he would probably reply that it is rather the medium of revelation. At this stage we see something of his epistemology, which he claims is based solely on Scripture but necessitates a special illumination to be 'in the know'. This may sound somewhat Gnostic to some critics, especially to those fond of finding supposed Gnostic influences or motifs in most of what they disagree with. Certainly Gill never admits to any Gnostic influence per se,³³ and his Augustinian theology would strongly object to such an estimation.

Furthermore, he repudiates the rabbinic "secret senses of

Cont'd:...

far, lest we fall into wild and fanciful interpretations" (Sermons, vol.III, p.95).

31. Orme, Introduction to Baxter's Works, vol.I, p.677.

32. S & T, vol.II, p.449. Cf. Cause, p.17. Occasionally, however, Gill breaks this rule. Parks tried to prove the truth of Limited Atonement through typological arguments: "Analogy proves the particularity of redemption" (Five Points, p.43). Pink: "O.T. types ... are generally the best interpreters of the doctrinal statements of the N.T., providing we carefully bear in mind that the antitype is always of a higher order and superior nature to what prefigured it" (Santification, p.21).

33. On Gill and Gnosticism, see Section G below.

Scripture",³⁴ even if he does put too much stock in the Zohar. What is the source, then, of this secret illumination? It is not entirely the logic of Deism, though he was accused of that by a contemporary writer because of his allegorizing.³⁵ We shall see in the next section that his methodology did indeed share much in common with Deism. It was more than just the emphasis on logic. It could well be that he tried to stay in the tradition of Calvin and the Puritan Federalists while trying desperately to reconcile them with the Antinomians. The latter were far more mystically oriented (see Chapter X below) than the former. The Puritans rejected virtually all forms of mysticism, so Gill was caught in the tension. Quite likely it is this tension that appears in his helter-skelter allegorizing.

Like Luther, Gill's allegorizing was Christocentric. This, too, provides a clue to the difficulty of his allegorizing. This is especially apparent in his Exposition of the Song of Solomon, which was Gill's first production and therefore hints at patterns in his thought in the initial stages. In the Song Gill is far more allegorical than anywhere else. He is also more devotional than anywhere else, and in that he comes closer to the spirit of the Antinomians than in any of his other writings (his later defences of eternal justification, etc., were academic, whereas those of the Antinomians were more devotional). For example, the Antinomians stressed the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, which is a common (if not essential) motif in mysticism. Gill described this testimony academically and coldly. Emotional devotion is missing in the later Gill, but there were traces of it in his Song allegories, and these traces were Christocentric. Note his defence of allegory in the Song:

... such a part of scripture ... is so very mystical and obstruse. If I should be thought in any part of this work to have stretched the metaphors too far, I hope it will be imputed to an honest zeal, and a hearty desire to set forth the glory of Christ's person, and his exceeding great love to his church and people; to do which, all tropes and figures, all the flowers of rhetoric, fall abundantly short.³⁶

Hussey likewise reveals the difficulty of attempting to reconcile the

34. Conn on I Cor. 1:20.

35. Elliot, Dipping not Baptism, p.81.

36. Preface to Song. Cf. Preface to Conn, vol.V, p.ix.

Puritans and the Antinomians with a Christocentric emphasis,³⁷ but he disdained allegory and the tension may show itself instead in the awkward literary style he employs.

More tension still in Gill's typology can be found. Sometimes he allegorizes a Targumic allegory;³⁸ sometimes he allegorizes versional variant readings (as the LXX³⁹), manuscript variant readings⁴⁰ or different English renderings of the original text.⁴¹ It might appear that he was desperate for material to allegorize! Gill, however, surprises the reader when he fails to allegorize certain passages (like Leviathan in Job 41, often seen as a type of Satan). On the other hand, he compensates by often listing several possible allegorical interpretations and lets the reader take his choice,⁴² or even listing several things which an allegory does not represent.⁴³ Other oddities include an occasional reference to gematria⁴⁴ and numerology,⁴⁵ even the "Jewish cabalistic tree".⁴⁶ Paedo-Baptists would not be surprized that Gill did not share their typology of circumcision and baptism.⁴⁷ "There is always some likeness and agreement between the type and the antitype",⁴⁸ but there is no likeness between these two. Rather, "circumcision was a typical sign of Christ, as all ceremonies of the law were".⁴⁹

37. See his Glory of Christ Unveiled.

38. Comm on Job 21:14. Gill says the Targums do not usually allegorize "in a very orthodox way" (Comm on Eccl. 5:15).

39. As in Comm on Ex. 28:31.

40. As with the additions of Codex Bezae.

41. Often in Song.

42. E.g., "The reader may choose which interpretation he likes best" (Comm on Matt. 13:33). This was more typical of the early Gill than the later Gill. The early Gill did this in many places in the Song.

43. As in Comm on Jer. 24:1, Ex. 27:1.

44. E.g., Comm on II Cor. 12:9 and, of course, Rev. 13:17-18. Gematria is much the same as numerics (a la Panin) and both are more 'mystic' than numerology.

45. Comm on Col. 1:18. So too Hassell, History, p.47; and Pink, John, vol.III, pp.338-339; Revelation, pp.156-160.

46. Comm on I Peter 2:9, II Peter 1:17, I John 5:7, Rev. 1:4. Gill, however, does elsewhere warn against this in Comm on I Tim. 1:4.

47. S & T¹, vol.II, p.467.

48. Comm on Romans 4:11. Furthermore, as Popham stated, "the type and its antitype cannot co-exist in the same place, at the same time" (Counsel, p.18). Cf. Hoeksema, Reformed Dogmatics, pp.375, 408.

49. Comm on Rom. 4:11.

This last point is crucial and is the key for understanding salvation in the Old Covenant. "There is scarce any thing in the New Testament, but what was typified in the Old."⁵⁰ Hence Old Testament saints were saved in the same way as those in the New, with the exception that the Gospel was presented to them in an anticipatory way "in the promises, sacrifices, types, and figures of that dispensation; and they looked through them to him for it, and were saved by him, as New Testament believers are."⁵¹ The Puritans often used typology to answer the problem of Old Testament salvation,⁵² and Gill continued in this tradition and strove to maintain the unity of the means of salvation throughout the history of God's redemptive activity. According to Gill's Federalism, "the covenant at Sinai ... was a typical covenant".⁵³ That is, Sinaitic Covenant, like the other covenants, was a type of the eternal Covenant of Grace. This eternal Covenant was the antitype of the covenants, even though it preceded them. This is an unusual example of the antitype preceding the type. As for these covenants themselves,

... nothing is more evident than that oftentimes, in the writings of the Old Testament, temporal blessings are spoken of, as a figurative of spiritual blessing.⁵⁴

This is not to say that these covenants, blessings, or the events surrounding them were in any sense mythical. Gill rejected such a concept of Biblical history. A type is based upon an historical event. A type is not the same as a fable. A fable is a story which did not and could not have happened in history. There are no fables as such in Scripture.⁵⁵ A parable, on the other hand, is a story which could have occurred but did not necessarily happen. A type is the deeper, often prophetic, meaning contained in a historical event or person. Gill's typology is thus far more historically grounded than other forms of allegory.

50. Song, p.149.

51. Comm on Psa. 27:1. Cf. Comm on I Peter 4:6, Ex. 34:33.

52. Cf. Westminster Confession, VII:5; VIII:6. So also Saltmarsh, Free Grace, pp.166ff.; Marrow of Modern Divinity, p.69.

53. Comm on Psa. 50:16, Zech. 9:11.

54. Cause, p.143.

55. The only exceptions are the blatantly obvious ones, such as in Judges 9, but they are very few. "Figurative language", says Sawyer (p.259), "sets forth actual truth", not mythological truths.

The basis of saving faith before Christ was the same as after, only differently revealed. In the old economy, God's salvific revelation for faith was typological:

... the former administration of the covenant of grace, reaching from the fall of Adam to the coming of Christ, was by types and figures, by shadows and sacrifices, and by promises and prophecies of future things, which are now fulfilled.⁵⁶

These types, then, pointed to the eternal Covenant through the yet future New Covenant made by Christ, which itself was something of a type. Sometimes Gill sees certain verses in Old Testament poetry as types of the verbal interchange between the Father and the Son in the eternal Covenant.⁵⁷ At times he goes further and says that they were not the words of the author at all. The ceremonial law of Moses had special importance. "The whole ceremonial law ... had an evangelical signification", and as such "was the Jews' gospel".⁵⁸ Of all the ordinances of the ceremonial law, of greatest importance were those contained in sacrificial system.⁵⁹ As we shall see later, Gill's elimination of the ceremonial law for the present dispensation was the basis for some of the accusations of Antinomianism levelled against him.

Returning to the Christological implications of typology, we need to consider how Gill viewed the Messianic prophecies and types. Fortunately for our investigation Gill wrote a lengthy tract on the subject, The Prophecies of the Old Testament Respecting the Messiah, Considered and Proved to be Literally Fulfilled in Jesus (1728),⁶⁰ written against the Deist Anthony Collin's The Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered (1726). Gill's is a curious piece and tends to contradict (or further confuse) his typology elsewhere. It was only his second book and perhaps he

56. Body, p.360. Cf. Body, pp.348-360.

57. E.g., Comm on Psa. 40:11, 75:9, and much of the accepted Messianic Psalms (2, 89, 110, etc.). S.E. Pierce's Commentary on the Psalms follows the same pattern; examples can be found in Pink's Commentaries as well.

58. Body, Introduction, pp.xxxiv-xxxv; p.367. So too Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.108; Hoeksema, TK, vol.I, p.292. See Chapters VIII and X.

59. So also Crisp, CAE, vol.II, p.193; Marrow of Modern Divinity, p.69.

60. Found also in S & T², vol.III and in the rare third volume of S & T¹. Less argumentative but similar in content is S.E. Pierce's A Series of Discourses on the Special Revelations of the Lord Jesus Christ, from the Fall, to the Call of Abraham, etc.

later changed his typology, or at least developed it further in an unexpected way. Unlike Augustine, Gill never wrote any retractions. His thesis "sufficiently reprobates the mistaken notion that the character of the Messiah cannot be established from the prophecies of the Old Testament, without a mystical and allegorical sense of them - maintaining that they are to be understood in their first, literal, and obvious sense concerning our Redeemer" (Rippon).⁶¹ Gill was not repudiating the use of allegory in relation to Messianic prophecy, for in the book he shows how allegory gives even further light on the nature of the Messiah. His proposition is that the literal sense itself is enough for one to ascertain the nature of the Messiah, at least enough to provide the Gospel in that dispensation. Thus he denies that any further special illumination via allegory was needed for Old Testament saints. But by and large the book seems to contradict his later allegorizing scheme. If it is not a contradiction, it is the greatest example of the above-mentioned tension inherent in his typology. Compare, for example, the marked difference in emphasis concerning the use of allegory in Messianic prophecy in the later summary:

Whatsoever excellently, gloriously, emphatically, characteristically, is predicted of some person, not called by his own name, in the Prophecies, or in the Psalms, so that the singular predicates can be demonstrated in no singular subject of that or any other time, it must be taken as said and predicted of the Messiah. This rule will deceive no man ... In prophecies, which treat of Christ and his kingdom, that sense is best which is most spiritual.⁶²

Finally, there are two last aspects of his Christological allegorization that merit discussion. The first is the doctrine of the Logos. Gill repeatedly discusses Christ as the Logos of God. In this he explicitly points to several sources for his theology: Plato (which we shall discuss below), Philo, the Targums, and the Zohar. He thinks that Plato and other Greeks borrowed their Logos doctrine from the Old Testament Memra passages (e.g. Pro. 8) and that Philo combined motifs of the Targums available to him with the ideas of Plato (who probably did not use the Targums). This goes far beyond his interpreting the Prologue of John's Gospel. The theory there is that John used the terminology of the

61. Rippon, p.xix. Cf. Seymour, p.48.

62. Preface to Comm, vol.V, p.x.

Targums and Philo rather than Plato.⁶³ Gill goes further and allegorizes the words 'logos', 'memra' and other Greek and Hebrew words for 'word' in obviously impersonal references.⁶⁴ For example, verses on the Scriptures as the Word of God are discussed as such (the literal meaning) as well as of Christ the living Word in Flesh (the mystical meaning). This is not to say that he minimized the value of written Scripture. He accepted it as verbally and plenarily inspired by God, even dictated, and would not agree with modern concepts of Scripture merely containing or bearing witness to the Word. The Bible is the Word. It is verbal, propositional revelation. But Gill saw Christ as an even greater stage of revelation: the incarnate God Himself. This naturally fits in with the Federalist doctrine of the Prophetic office of Christ. His allegorizing of Christ as Word, then, does not negate his views of Scripture.

Christ is not only the focal point of Biblical revelation through prophecy and history, but also through the allegorical 'mystical' sense.⁶⁵ It is quite possible, he feels, that the Targums saw this. Gill continually mentions where the Targums add 'Word' (etc.) to the Bible, and he usually agrees with the interpretation.⁶⁶ Philo also possibly grasped this. Certainly the Zohar saw it. He puts the Zohar in the same tradition and in the now-rejected date of c.2nd century. He even sees Trinitarianism in the Zohar,⁶⁷ but that is possible since this late-medieval work betrays great Christian influence. (Indeed, sometimes it is hard to tell if it was Jewish influenced by Christians or vice-versa!) Gill also thought that Philo held to Trinitarianism,⁶⁸ though his was an impersonal Logos.

Secondly, Gill had a developed doctrine of Theophany. This involves more than just the obvious doctrine of Philo and the Targums.⁶⁹ It is

63. Comm on John 1:1; Body, pp.145-146; Trinity, pp.102ff.

64. E.g., Trinity, pp.98-120.

65. Christ is "the truth of all the types of the former dispensation" (Comm on Isa. 38:18). Cf. Comm on Col. 2:17; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.144, 198.

66. Cf. especially Comm on Lev. 20:23; Num. 6:27; Deut. 30:8; Josh. 24:23; II Sam. 7:21; Job 21:14; Psalms 9:2, 32:11, 33:21, 35:9.

67. Cf. especially Trinity, pp.19ff. This theory is rare among the Puritans, though found in Skepp (p.16), from whom Gill probably learned it.

68. Trinity, pp.36ff, 103-120.

69. Cf. Comm on Judges 10:11, 13:3; Trinity, pp.41ff. On Theophanies, see Hawker, Works, vol.I, pp.50-65.

perhaps another form of allegory. We might call it the personal or Theophanic allegory. It is more than the Federal way of seeing the Church as 'Christ mystical'⁷⁰ (that is, the Church as Christ's representative on earth as He is its representative in Heaven). His Theophany doctrine is something else. "Christ, the word, came to Jews before his incarnation, not only in types, personal and real, and in promises and prophecies, and in the word and ordinances, but in person".⁷¹ Note how the Theophanic appearances were literal. Yet they were not full incarnated manifestations.⁷² They were personal allegories of His future personal incarnation: "his frequent appearances in human form, before his incarnation, shew how willing and ready he was really to assume the human nature".⁷³

Other figures of speech related to allegory will be discussed later in the present dissertation. Hyperbole and metonymy will be discussed under Universalism and Limited Atonement (Chapter IX). Anthropomorphism, anthropopathism and prosopopeia will be discussed under Sovereignty (Chapter III). The confusion in the failure to distinguish between metaphor, simile and literalism will also be discussed in relation with Crisp's bold statements concerning the atonement, justification, and assurance. Finally, we mention only in passing that very few of the Hyper-Calvinists have equalled the more extreme Antinomians of the seventeenth-century, notably William Dell. Dell went so far in his spiritualising that he came to hold that water baptism in the New Testament was only a temporary type. It had validity only for a short time and has since passed away. This concurs with his frequent viewing of Scripture solely in terms of the spiritual rather than the physical or historical.⁷⁴

70. E.g., Song, p.132.

71. Comm on John 1:11. Some associate the doctrine of Theophany with the theory of Eternal Humanity (e.g., J. Pye Smith, Theology, p.492; H.L. Kendall, 'Watts', pp.436-437). See Chapter V.

72. Comm on John 17:6.

73. Comm on Zech. 1:8.

74. Cf. Works, pp.375-409. See Chapter V.

D. PARADOX

It is more than a literary nicety to say that the Hyper-Calvinist view of paradox is paradoxical. On the one hand, there are some indications that those such as Gill accepted the concept of paradox, mystery, antinomy and theological balance, while there are other hints that they did not, or at least in the way taught by other Calvinists. Because of its importance to theological methodology and its application to several of the crucial issues of Hyper-Calvinism, it is right that we give a brief discussion here.¹

First there is the question of contradiction. Believing in the full infallibility of the Bible, all High and Hyper-Calvinists follow Calvin in holding that there is no contradiction as such between doctrines which can properly be derived from the Scriptures. There may appear to be some contradictions between certain truths, said Crisp, but in point of fact there is none.² The school of Hoeksema has been particularly insistent on the rejection of contradiction. Hoeksema himself stated, "mysteries are not the same as flat contradictions, and that the latter are no mysteries, but plain nonsense".³ And Gill agreed with this, that all the truths of the Gospel are in perfect harmony with each other without contradiction.⁴

1. Later we will observe the relevancy of paradox to the questions of sovereignty/responsibility, time/eternity, election/evangelism, grace/law, and other issues.

2. CAE, vol.I, p.294. On Crisp and paradox, see CAE, vol.I, p.205; vol.II, p.56; Fuller, Works, p.324; Buck, Dictionary, p.220; Campbell, 'The Antinomian Controversies', p.74. Philpot: "Do you mean to receive nothing as divine truth which involves apparent contradictions? We say apparent, for we cannot allow them to be real" (Eternal Sonship, p.22). Pink: "The same seeming paradox appears in the doctrine of man's spiritual impotence and accountability ... So, too, the doctrine of particular redemption: that Christ acted as the surety of and made atonement for the sins of God's elect only; yet that the gospel makes a free and bona fide offer of salvation to all who hear it" (Revelation, p.145). Others agree with Pink on this, but Pink himself had reservations about the free offer and elsewhere rejected it. See Chapters VIII and IX.

3. Whosoever Will, p.149. Cf. Engelsma, pp.39-41, 46-47, 97, 119; Hanks, in Hoeksema, Hanks et al., p.35. Palmer: "Anything which contradicts itself is absurd in idea" (Eternal Generation, p.4), but "a mystery is not a contradiction" (Supremacy, p.10).

4. Comm on II Cor. 1:19, Gal. 1:17; Song, pp.46-47, 141. Gill may have equated paradox and contradiction, e.g.: "Christ dying for an unbelieving Christian, and a Christian being under a condemnatory decree, are unintelligible phrases, mere paradoxes, and contradictions in terms" (Cause, p.32). This implies a rejection of paradox.

Then there is the matter of consistency. Samuel Bourn, a Deist who opposed Gill, wrote under the pseudonym 'A Consistent Christian'. Deists so stressed reason that anything that was not consistent with itself was deemed untrue. Gill, of course, strove to prove that the truths of Calvinistic Christianity were inherently self-consistent. Pink later summed up the Calvinist perspective on this point: "The mere fact that we are unable to discern the consistency and harmony between two distinct lines of truth, certainly does not warrant our rejecting either one of them".⁵ Therefore, because all truths are consistent with each other, "One part of the truth must never be used to nullify another part of it".⁶

There is also mystery involved in paradox and truth.⁷ The concept of mystery receives a fair amount of attention in Hyper-Calvinist books.⁸ "God himself is the mystery of mysteries", wrote Hoeksema.⁹ The Trinity, says Gill, is "the sublime mystery ... the mystery of all mysteries ... the mystery of faith".¹⁰ That is, the doctrine of the Trinity is above but not contrary to right reason.¹¹ Truth and revelation both involve the element of mystery. "When a thing is revealed, it is no longer a mystery that it is, but may still remain a mystery how it is, what it is."¹² But this revelation is not given to all men: "The Gospel is full of mysteries" and are "only known to such to whom it is given to know them".¹³ Moreover, not all mysteries are revealed. The answers to some mysteries belong to the secret will of God; God has not revealed how

5. Election and Justification, p.156. "Absolute necessity and human responsibility are, therefore, perfectly compatible, whether we can perceive this consistency or no" (Ibid., p.159).

6. Practical Christianity, p.215.

7. Hoeksema seems to equate mystery with paradox in Survey, pp.283-284.

8. See especially the following: Hawker, Works, vol.IV, pp.586-587; Philpot, Meditations, vol.II, p.10; Hazelton, Sermons, p.261; Styles, Guide, pp.86-87; Pink, Paul, pp.50-53; Brine, Vindication, pp.1-36. Palmer: "He who denies all mystery in the Scripture is himself a mystery" (Baptismal Regeneration, p.57).

9. TK, vol.I, p.362.

10. Trinity, p.1.

11. Trinity, p.2; S & T, vol.II, p.116; Comm on I Cor. 15:51. Brine: "Divine faith is a farther Light than Reason; but it is not at all contrary to it" (Vindication, p.68).

12. S & T, vol.II, p.116. Cf. Body, p.158. This axiom is found nearly verbatim elsewhere. See Brine, Vindication, p.3; Warburton, Gospel, p.59; Tucker, Predestination, p.120; Philpot, Meditations, vol.II, p.36.

13. Comm on I Cor. 2:7. 2:9; II Cor. 11:6; Psa. 78:2; Job 12:22; Body, p.374. Crisp: "All the doctrines of the gospel are paradoxes to carnal men" (CAE, vol.II, p.56). Cf. Goodwin, Works, vol.IV, pp.271-280.

certain truths can be harmonized.¹⁴ Moreover, there are two meanings of every text in Scripture, one of which is 'the mysterious meaning',¹⁵ also called 'the enigmatical sense'.¹⁶ It is the deeper meaning. Its profundity causes non-illuminated persons to question or reject it. But believers accept it, though they may not fully understand it. Some compare this with Gnosticism, but the Hyper-Calvinists themselves reject this comparison.

What about antithesis? Gill did indeed speak of 'antithesis' but he did so in an absolutist rather than synthetical manner.¹⁷ That is, High and Hyper-Calvinism both have rejected Dialectical Theology, some branches of which have parallels with Low Calvinism. 'The rule of opposition'¹⁸ means that two opposite statements cannot be harmonized with each other. 'A' cannot equal 'non-A'. At this juncture it appears that Gill has doubts about the correctness of paradox, but since these terms are not found often in his works we do not found much upon them.

What about the concept of paradox itself? It has been explicitly accepted by many High¹⁹ and Hyper-Calvinists.²⁰ It was particularly a favourite device of the Antinomians.²¹ Robert Towne confessed, "I am a sinner and no sinner. Daily I fall in myself and stand in Christ forever. My works fail, his never can, and they are also mine".²² Dell echoed this in another apparent reference to Gal. 2:20, "It is not I; I

14. Body, p.341. See Chapter III.

15. Comm on Rev. 17:5, 17:7; Deut. 22:10, etc.

16. Comm on Isa. 11:6, etc.

17. Comm on Rom. 6:16, etc.

18. Cause, p.97, etc.

19. E.g., Spurgeon, Autobiography, vol.I, p.174. For Fuller, cf. Clipsham, p.274. If The Marrow of Modern Divinity is High Calvinist, see pp.217-221. Curiously, Calvin stated: "I hate paradox" (Tracts and Treatises, vol.III, p.149), yet we find paradoxes in his writings. Two recent High Calvinist works found much upon the 'antinomy', or paradox, of election/limited atonement and evangelism, namely Hulse, Free Offer, and Packer, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God.

20. E.g., Brine, Justification, p.70; Pink, Gleanings in the Scriptures, pp.266, 269, 296, 328; Hebrews, p.192; Beatitudes, p.55; Hoeksema, Survey, p.277; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, p.190; Bradbury, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.IV, p.242; O.S. Dolby, Surrey Tabernacle Witness, vol.12, p.181; Omega, Regeneration, p.70.

21. Though the Antinomians accepted paradox and antinomy, the word 'Antinomian' is not a direct derivation of 'antinomy', though there are significant parallels. See Chapter X. Saltmarsh founded much upon paradox (e.g., Free Grace, pp.202-203).

22. Assertion of Grace, p.40.

am through faith become a member of Christ, and I am he and he is I".²³ (Hoeksema, however, rejected this sort of confession.)²⁴ It is a paradox, said Crisp, "that God should, from all eternity, look with eyes of love upon his people, and yet there should be a time in which there should be an alienation or enmity between God and them".²⁵ Gill would have had difficulty accepting the sentiments of these statements, particularly the last one. For him, the Supralapsarian scheme proves that the elect have never been under the wrath of God in the same way as the rest of men. Only in an improper manner can it be said that they have been under wrath in any sense.²⁶

When Crisp stated that "Contraries illustrate each other"²⁷ he was not only thinking of the mathematical precision of truth and error, but also the paradoxical relationship between truths which appear contradictory. But, if we may be allowed to speculate, Crisp's outlook was different from Gill's in that he viewed paradoxical truths as equal but opposite verities, while Gill tended to view truths in a more vertical manner. For Gill, two statements may be at harmony with each other but in some mysterious manner one of them really takes precedence with the other. Take, for example, the problem of evil. Gill noted:

There are two things to be set down for certain and eternal truths, whether we are capable of reconciling them to our own satisfaction and that of others, or no; the one is, that God is not and cannot be the author of sin; the other is, that the providence of God has a concern with and in all sinful actions in some sense or another.²⁸

At first glance it appears that Gill sets these two truths up as equal but opposite truths. But, as we shall see in Chapter IV, Gill felt that he was able to reconcile them to his own satisfaction. He did this not only by redefining the phrase 'the author of sin' but also by re-interpreting the holiness of God in its relationship with divine

23. Works, p.301.

24. Cf. IK, vol.II, p.326.

25. CAE, vol.I, p.205; vol.II, p.56.

26. See Chapters IV, V and XI below. Not all Hyper-Calvinists have accepted this point.

27. CAE, vol.I, p.124. Wilks: "Do not contraries best display each other?"(Wilks, p.88).

28. Body, pp.301-302. Tucker calls this the "grand paradox ... the truth of which must be evident to every one who has any just ideas of the divine perfections" (Predestination, p.120). See Chapter IV.

sovereignty and Providence.

Let us take a look at the question of balance for a minute. Gill actually had little, if anything, to say about balance. Most Hyper-Calvinists view the idea as being suspect because Moderate Calvinists are always calling for a balanced view of things. Arthur Pink, however, was placed in the precarious position of standing with a foot in each of the High and Hyper-Calvinist camps. Consequently, it is no surprise to find him often calling for balance.²⁹ And yet he himself did not heed this call.

For Pink, "the truth lies between two extremes".³⁰ Moderate Calvinists often spoke like this. For instance, they would say that at one extreme is Arminianism and at the other is Hyper-Calvinism or Antinomianism. Extremes are extensions of complementary, even paradoxical, truths. Hence, truth is balanced and "it is only as the balance of truth is preserved between these two that we are delivered from error".³¹ Pink specifically applied this principle to the problem of divine sovereignty and human responsibility and stated "It is difficult to preserve the balance of truth".³² Furthermore, wrote Pink, the balance of truth is comparable to the balance of beauty - the several constituents must be in perfect proportion with each other else the overall picture is distorted and grows ugly in due proportion to its imbalance.³³

Now some critics feel that Pink's observations are correct and that his critique suggests that Hyper-Calvinists do not keep the balance, but in over-emphasizing the truth of divine sovereignty to an extreme they have strayed into error and have produced a grotesque picture of true Calvinism. If this is granted, then perhaps Pink's own theology may be

29. E.g., Sovereignty of God, pp.202, 237-238, 279, 281; Elisha, p.10; Paul, pp.288, 290, 302, 304; Profiting, p.57; Reconciliation, pp.1, 187; Gleanings from the Scriptures, pp.281-283, 292, 296. Iain Murray emphasizes this aspect of Pink's theology in his book on Pink (Pink, pp.52, 199-200, 225-228, 236-238, 249), as does Belcher (Born to Write, especially p.116).

30. David, vol.I, p.151. Contrast to Spurgeon: "I do not think the truth lies between the two extremes, but in them both" (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, vol.IV, p.344).

31. Hebrews, p.176. Cf. Belcher, Born to Write, p.61.

32. John, vol.I, p.313.

33. Cf. Sovereignty of God, p.279.

subject to the same critique. After all, as we shall see, he indulged in no small amount of Hyper-Calvinism. Others would argue that it all depends where one stands.

Herman Hoeksema is one who, we feel, rejected this idea of balance, or at least Pink's application of it to the sovereignty-responsibility problem. He castigated "double track theologians" who deal with the problem differently than he does, notably those who believe in the free offer. "But this double-track theology is no mystery, but plain evasion and nonsense".³⁴ We cannot, his son Homer argued, accept the intermediate view which accepts that Arminianism has an aspect of the truth which is minimized by some strains of Calvinism.³⁵ It is not just a matter of emphasis but content. This closely parallels the way in which Hawker and others condemn free offer theology as 'yea and nay' preaching.³⁶

Atherton accepted that there are two sides to every question and that some persons err by seeing only one and rejecting the other.³⁷ D.A. Carson, in discussing the sovereignty-responsibility question, says that problems arise when one resorts to Reductionism - that is, when one feels that he must make a choice between one or the other (either/or) rather than accepting both (both/and). Hence, the one who accepts sovereignty but rejects (or minimizes) responsibility is employing the same methodology as the one who accepts responsibility and rejects (or minimizes) sovereignty. The problems remains; it has only been reshaped and compounded.³⁸ This perceptive observation finds some precursory parallels with Aikman's criticism of Hyper-Calvinism in the middle of last century. Aikman noted that extremes accept only half the truth and employ the same method in doing so. But he added this interesting comment: the extremes meet. The Hyper-Calvinists so stress sovereignty and grace that door of licence is opened - the very thing that they condemned in their opponents. Thus, Hyper-Calvinism is correctly called doctrinal Antinomianism.³⁹

34. Good Pleasure, pp.68-69.

35. Voice, p.182.

36. See Chapter VIII.

37. Shepherd, p.3.

38. Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility, p.220.

39. Judgement, pp.11, 68.

Hence the paradox of the Hyper position. On the one hand, they speak as if they accept paradox and balance, while on the other they feel that a choice must be made between two truths. And they invariably choose those truths which have to do with the exaltation of divine sovereignty.⁴⁰ Finally, Sheehan relates the Hyperist rejection of antinomy to their extreme emphasis on 'rationalistic logic'.⁴¹ But what exactly is the Hyper-Calvinist view of logic?

40. Styles is clear proof of this: "since Human Responsibility and Divine Sovereignty do not simply involve a paradox, but are destructive to each other, one must be untrue", and thus he rejects human responsibility (Guide, p.86). We will investigate this choice more fully in Chapter III.

41. "It is fundamentally rationalistic. It takes certain truths from the teaching of Scripture and then builds up a system of theology on the basis of nothing more than human logic... This preoccupation with logical systematisation leads the Hyper-Calvinist to ignore the possibility of antinomy or duality" ('The Presentation of the Gospel', pp.42-43). Some Low Calvinists criticize High Calvinists on this exact point. Highs reason that in the atonement Christ either died for all or some; since nobody for whom the Saviour died can perish, Christ therefore died only for some. Dualistic Low Calvinists argue that the atonement is a dualistic representation of the antinomy between sovereignty and responsibility. Christ thus died for all but especially for the elect. See further in Chapter IX.

E. REVELATION AND RIGHT REASON

It is often stated by some scholars that post-Reformation Calvinism began to depart from Calvin's Biblical exegesis into a growing Aristotelianism.¹ Other critics see Aristotle's logic in Calvin himself.² By the eighteenth century the Enlightenment was gaining momentum and was reverting to the Renaissance acceptance of reason. Reason became heir to the throne previously occupied by faith. Various explanations have been suggested for this shift: Newtonian science, the failure of the Puritan movement in theology and politics, colonial expansionism, etc.

Deism now became the prevalent theology, though it is perhaps better described as philosophy. Much of the debate between revelational Protestantism and rationalist Deism became less heated as each side made concessions and re-adjustments. As Seymour aptly says, "While the Deists were trying to prove that their rationalism was not anti-Christian, many orthodox ministers tried to prove that their Christianity was not unreasonable, but in this process of rationalization, some ministers began to talk like Deists..."³ Critics of Hyper-Calvinism often charge that the Hyper-Calvinists were over tempted by their Deist opponents into incorporating Aristotelian logic into their methodology.⁴ Even some Moderate Calvinists⁵ and other contemporary opponents⁶ made this criticism. Is this a just criticism? Several things must be investigated in order to determine the answer.

First there is the background of Deism. Deism seemed to rise out of the remains of post-Restoration British Calvinism. Though it is very

1. E.g., Basil Hall, 'Calvin Against the Calvinists', pp.25-27; T.F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man, p.7; Toon, HC, p.24. Some characterize Hyper-Calvinism by 'extreme' and 'rigid' logic (e.g., Good, pp.76, 84, 90, 170, 265; Rice, Hell, pp.23, and often; Jackson, Concise Dictionary, p.395; Rooy, p.12; Nuttall, 'Northamptonshire', p.114). Fletcher often condemned 'Logica Genevensis' or 'Geneva Logic' (cf. especially Works, vol.II). Bernard Honeysett, himself a former Hyper-Calvinist, in recent times has given this sharp criticism: "The tyranny of hyper-Calvinism arises from an undue inclination to logic, often found in those who feel they must have a water-tight system, but who do not have the breadth of mind or the spiritual maturity to recognise the limitation of human reason when it comes to something so profound as the decrees of God" (How to Address Unbelievers, p.9).

2. As Perry Miller, The Puritans, p.32.

3. Seymour, p.96.

4. As Toon, HC, pp.83, 119, 147; Seymour, p.202; Reed, pp.47, 131; Miller, The Puritans, p.30. Cf. Nuttall, 'Calvinism in Free Church History', p.425; Engelsma, p.97.

5. E.g., Alverey Jackson, The Question Answered, pp.19, 50. Note the full title of Aikman's book: Judgement of the Judges of Jehovah: Or, The Rationalism of Ultra-Calvinism Repudiated.

6. Elliot, Dipping not Baptizing, p.81.

similar to Socinianism, some strains of Deism had certain affinities with a 'reasonable' Calvinism whereas Socinianism arose more out of a 'reasonable' Arminianism. In effect, though, they are much the same. Most of the Presbyterian and Anglican Calvinists became Deist, while the Independent and Baptist Calvinists continued in the old Federalism; some became Hyper-Calvinist and others formed Moderate Calvinism or Calvinistic Methodism. Arminians - whether Presbyterian, Anglican, Independent or Baptist - drifted into Arianism and then Socinianism, though some were involved in the Evangelical Awakening and Wesleyan Methodism. The Hyper and Moderate Calvinists both opposed Deism-Socinianism.⁷ Skepp opposed Deism and called it 'moral suasion'.⁸ John Gill battled with Deism in several tracts and throughout his other works.⁹

Gill condemned the Schoolmen and Aristotle¹⁰ but does not say much about them. Socinians were bitterly opposed ("The Socinians take a great deal of pains to damn themselves and everybody else, as much as in them lies"¹¹), especially concerning the deity and substitutionary atonement of Christ. For this Gill deals with the Racovian Catechism as the representative of Socinian teaching. He did not greatly differentiate between Arminianism, Arianism, Socinianism or Deism, though this is the descending order in which they are viewed. One leads to another. (Arminianism, as we shall later see, is seen as sometimes leading to Romanism instead). Deism is especially fought against. Deists are classed among "the wicked and reprobate part of the world" and are "atheistical prophets and people ... like the heathen".¹² They are likened to the Saducees.¹³ They reject "the light of divine revelation";

7. As Abraham Taylor, The Insufficiency of Natural Religion. Similarly, nineteenth-century Hyper-Calvinists opposed 'German rationalism' and 'English infidelity' (Philpot, Eternal Sonship, p.78).

8. Skepp, pp.32, 56. Pink was not accepting the Deistic view when he said that God uses "moral suasion and sweet inducements" to lead His children (Perseverance, p.67).

9. See Rippon, pp.xxvff and Seymour, pp.95-107.

10. Comm on Col.2:8; Body, Introduction, p.xxxix. Gill quotes Aristotle extensively in the Body, though not always with approval. Cf. Dell's utter condemnation of all philosophers, especially Aristotle. To Dell, reading and quoting them is dangerous (Works, pp.487-584).

11. S & T¹, vol.I, p.301.

12. Comm on John 17:21, Jer. 23:23. Gill's (Hyper-Calvinist) successors have also considered the successors of Deism (e.g., rationalism, liberalism, modernism, higher criticism, etc.) to be virtual or actual atheists (cf., e.g., Popham, Sermons, vol.IV, p.14). Cf. Section I below.

13. Body, Introduction, p.xxxv.

they "don't believe in Christ"; they reject Biblical authority; they misrepresent the morality of Moses.¹⁴

Gill exchanged tracts with the Deistical Samuel Chandler and Anthony Collins, and with the Arians, Samuel Bourn and Samuel Clarke. Occasionally he mentions Newton (a Socinian) in the Commentary but usually it is with regard to historical or literary matter. He does the same with Spinoza.¹⁵ Locke, "a writer of great note",¹⁶ is opposed for rejecting the doctrine of resurrection,¹⁷ but is otherwise rarely mentioned. Gill interacts here and there with Hobbes,¹⁸ who is taken as a representative Deist and is withstood and sometimes even mocked. "Hobbes, that bold advocate for infidelity, who endeavoured to harden himself and others, in the disbelief of a future state, would be very uneasy, if, at any time, he was alone in the dark."¹⁹ Gill had been accused of teaching a determinism similar to Hobbes, but was quick to reply that he disagrees with Hobbes, "our English atheist",²⁰ over the Trinity, the person and offices and satisfaction of Christ, justification by faith, the immortality of the soul, the state of the soul after death, eternal torment in Hell, and universal and total depravity²¹ (also the dating of Zephaniah,²² a minor issue). Curiously, Gill expressed agreement with Hobbes and Locke on the 'social contract' nature of civil government.²³

These are the major philosophers whom Gill mentions. There are no references to Rousseau, Pascal, Descartes, Voltaire, or even Berkeley. Nor does he mention the Latitudinarians or Cambridge Platonists as such, though Simon Patrick is respected for his Biblical exegesis. Most

14. Comm on Job 5:14, Rev. 21:8, Psa. 147:11 (cf. Deut. 28:46; S & T¹, vol.II, p.178), Ex. 32:10.

15. Cf. Body, p.606; Comm on Ezra 6:18, Esther (Introduction), I Chron. (Introduction), and the early chapters of Genesis.

16. S & T², vol.III, p.391.

17. S & T², vol.III, p.390; cf. Body, p.611.

18. Cf. especially Cause, pp.187-190, 203-204.

19. S & T², vol.III, p.377. This is evidently what Gill meant in mentioning Hobbes's "leap in the dark" (S & T¹, vol.I, p.469). See Chapter VII below.

20. Body, p.10; cf. Comm on Gen. (Introduction).

21. Cause, pp.188-190.

22. Comm on Zeph. (Introduction).

23. Body, p.984. See Chapter V below.

surprising of all, however, is his complete silence on Bishop Butler. Butler was a close friend of Samuel Chandler²⁴, with whom Gill exchanged tracts, and this may explain it. That Butler was Anglican would not necessarily eliminate him from Gill's praises, for Gill appreciated Ussher (who, like Butler, was an Anglican Bishop) and was a close friend of Toplady. Ussher and Toplady, however, were both strong Calvinists and Butler was not. In spite of this, Gill's debate with Deism employed quite a few of Butler's arguments.

To Gill, it was the Deists who were Antinomian, not he. They believed in a 'moral suasion' whereby one merited forgiveness and, like all Arminians, they emphasized free will and the innate goodness of man. They enjoyed the creation and ignored the Creator. To Gill they were Epicurean and to them he was a Stoic. There is much truth in this Deist/Epicurean vs. Hyper-Calvinist/Stoic comparison. Indeed, in some of the very places where Gill rejects Deism he also admits partial agreement with Stoicism.²⁵ Further parallels of Deism with Epicureanism will be shown in Chapter X (Antinomianism), as well as of Hyper-Calvinism with Deism in Chapter III (Sovereignty) and with Stoicism (section H below).

In spite of this professed opposition to Deist rationalism, Gill's methodology had much in common with it. He admits using contemporary philosophy at times. (For example: "... this [federal traducianism] may be greatly illustrated and confirmed by modern philosophy" and "The heathen themselves have acknowledged it".²⁶) He rebukes apostate churchmen who "set up their own reason as the guide in matters of religion",²⁷ but did not discard 'right reason' which is in accord with revelation. "There is nothing in revelation contrary to reason, though there are things above it, and of which it is not a competent judge".²⁸ 'Right reason', a term used also as early as Owen,²⁹ is a term often used by Gill.

24. New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, vol.III, p.2.

25. Cf. Body, pp.279-281, 284-285; Comm on Acts 17:18.

26. Body, pp.329-330. Also "Reason confirms it, that so it must be" (Body, p.330).

27. Comm on Ezek. 44:10.

28. Body, p.23. Cf. Comm on Job 6:25; Body, p.15. H.A. Long (p.147) said that Christ "was no logician, though he never violated logic". Note the full titles of one of Stockell's books: Scripture and Reason, The Standards of All Religion; and of Tucker's book: Predestination Calmly Considered, From Principles of Reason. See also Philpot, Meditations, vol.II, p.10; J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.II, p.238; Skepp, p.50; Pink, Interpretation, pp.56-60; Comfort, p.32; ...Cont'd:

This 'right reason' is mostly built upon inference and syllogism. Brine described it as follows:

Reason is to infer conclusions from premises which revelation delivers. And this may be done with certainty provided we proceed carefully in considering the true sense of the propositions wherein some truths are contained, from which other truths are evidently deducible.³⁰

Syllogistic logic had been accepted by mainstream Puritan Federalism.³¹ Ames is a particularly good example of this.³² Crisp rarely used it and took exception with the usual 'assurance' syllogism.³³ Gill's opponents - such as Bourn³⁴ - admit using "the Syllogistical Argument", and Gill himself regularly employs syllogism (though he never uses the precise term). Other arguments are also used: the argument from experience ("all experience confirms it"³⁵), "argument from the greater to the lesser",³⁶ "common sense",³⁷ and the argument from silence. Yet Gill drew back at times, as in his defence from Antinomian charges: "I judge it most unreasonable to charge persons with holding consequences which they clearly deny, though these consequences may follow never so clearly from principles held by them".³⁸ Note how even this statement is based on 'reason'. Similarly

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Gertrude Hoeksema, Therefore, pp.108, 146-147. Sarrells made a point of stressing the use of logic and reason (e.g., Systematic Theology, p.207).

29. Works, vol.X, p.313. Cf. Hussey's 'evangelical reason' contra Deist 'natural reason'. (Cf. Toon, HC, pp.83, 147). Gadsby condemned 'carnal reason' as opposed to true faith (Works, vol.I, p.210).

30. Brine, Vindication, p.55. Also: "logical deductions are to be made from Biblical premises" (quoted in Toon, HC, p.116). On Brine and reason, see his Vindication, pp.1-57. Hoeksema accepted the use of syllogisms (e.g., TK, vol.I, p.64; Survey, p.400; Good Pleasure, p.189).

31. Cf. Kevan, p.34.

32. Ames, p.224. Cf. Eusden's Introduction, pp.44-47.

33. CAE, vol.II, pp.66-67. On the 'assurance syllogism', see Chapter VII below.

34. Bourn, The Birmingham Dialogue, part 2, p.55.

35. Comm on I Kings 2:2. Cf. Body, p.330. So also Skepp, p.179; Hoeksema, Believers, p.135. See Chapter X.

36. Comm on Romans 8 (Introduction). Cf. Comm on Jude 9, Job 15:16. Pink employed the argument from the lesser to the greater (Perseverance, p.13).

37. Body, pp.193, 258; S & T¹, vol.II, p.432. Wilks considered common sense to be worldly (pp.34-40).

38. S & T¹, vol.II, p.180. Gadsby said something similar: "I have often thought that, before men begin to degrade a sentiment, they ought to be well informed in that sentiment, and perfectly understand it; and if they are not certain of this, they ought to rest quiet till they are, lest

...Cont'd:

he shared Brine's reservations about the metonymical argument ("from a part to the whole"³⁹).

Maxims and axioms are important with Gill. These are undoubted statements which can be used as premisses to be united with Biblical premisses to form a syllogism. One popular and repeated maxim which "is certainly true and indisputable" is that "nothing in time can be the cause of what was done in eternity".⁴⁰

There are two noticeable surprises to be mentioned here. First, Gill's maxim that "an indefinite proposition [is] equal to an universal one"⁴¹ squarely contradicts his doctrine of Federal Particularism, especially concerning limited atonement (see Chapter IX). Secondly, though he is Supralapsarian, he agrees with Twisse that the difference between Supralapsarianism and Sublapsarianism is "merely apex logicus, a point of logic".⁴² This is not a compromise of his position on the decrees but, as we shall see later, it is his way of admitting that the Sublapsarian position has a great deal of truth in it but that the Supralapsarian position goes further.

It is often said that Gill and other Hyper-Calvinists use tautological logic (begging the question, reasoning in a circle).⁴³ Though Gill rejects tautology as a literary device, he does often 'reason in a circle'. From his perspective this is valid because it is based on Scriptural revelation, from which there is no higher appeal. To his critics, especially Deists, this is absurd and arrogant and foolish; to which Gill would reply that it is only to be expected that they think so, since they reject Biblical authority and (therefore) God Himself. This form of reasoning has very often been a basic part of Federal methodology, expounded in a similar form more fully in recent days by Federalists like Cornelius Van Til (though he uses rather less 'logic' per se).

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they should degrade themselves rather than the doctrine they oppose" (Works, vol.I, p.155). Some charge this against Gadsby. Cf. Parks, Chastisement, p.14.

39. Brine, Justification, p.68.

40. Body, p.188.

41. Comm on Gal. 3:10.

42. S & T¹, vol.II, p.66. See Chapter IV below. For Twisse, see his The Riches of God's Love, p.35.

43. Wesley, Predestination, p.126; Seymour, p.292; Orme, in Introduction to Baxter's Works, vol.I p.677.

Whether Gill or other Hyper-Calvinists are guilty of mixing Aristotelian logic with Biblical exegesis greatly depends upon the theological perspective of the critic himself. If one is in agreement with Gill's methodology, he may defend it in one of two ways. He may admit that, indeed, a degree of Aristotelian logic is used; in this case the critic would contend that such logic is consistent with the Bible. He would then use arguments similar to Gill's in defending Gill, such as this logic preceded Aristotle and is a valid use of natural revelation, or that one can accept some of the logical method without accepting all of it or some of the content which Aristotle himself affixed to it. The other way of defending Gill would be to deny that his method employs Aristotelian logic; the defendant must then show how the two systems are different yet are often equated by both those accepting or rejecting Gill. The popular means of doing that is as Gill himself did: asserting that he is misunderstood by weak Christians and blind non-Christians.

The critic who disagrees with Gill's method is in a different position altogether, but he too must have some personal assessment of Aristotelian logic. If he rejects it, he may claim that he rejects both Gill and Aristotle either because the two are equated in basic method and/or content, or because he differentiates the two and still rejects both. If, on the other hand, he accepts Aristotle but rejects Gill, he must prove that the two are incompatible in method and/or content. This critical assessment of Gill and Aristotle is further complicated by several other factors. One is that the critic's personal position is involved and this often results in polemical misunderstanding or over-reacting to the other side. Then there are those claiming neutrality or intellectual objectivity. Of this sort there are two kinds: those who use this excuse as a pretext to accuse the other of subjective (and wrongful) bias, or those who are totally ignorant of the issue in the debate. On the other hand, some critics may opt. for a hybrid position concerning Gill and Aristotle. This hybrid usually becomes dialectical in the modern sense. And there are also those who reject this entire manner of describing the controversy, either because they say the method of description itself is Aristotelian and/or Gillist.

This pertains to the battle between Deists and Hyper-Calvinists in that we see various positions taken as illustrated above. Deists usually accepted Aristotle's method in all essential points but rejected Gillism because they said it was incompatible with Aristotelianism. Some charged

that Hyper-Calvinists were unsuccessfully trying to merge Federalism with Aristotelianism resulting in mere confusion. Others said that Hyper-Calvinism was the confusion that arose from trying to merge a Deism with Federalism. The Hyper-Calvinists, on the other hand, denied that they accepted Aristotle. They sometimes charged that it was the Moderate Calvinists who represented the confusion which resulted from mixing Puritan Federalism with Aristotle. It must be remembered that the Hyper-Calvinists all considered themselves as being in the Puritan tradition. To them any position outside this orthodox circle was more or less based on rationalism.

Central to this controversy is the debate about natural revelation. Perhaps no other issue has been as hotly debated with Calvinists of all varieties by other Calvinists and non-Calvinists of all varieties. In more recent times it has received popularity in the Barth-Brunner debate, in which many of the same arguments were used and similar accusations hurled. What made this debate unique in the Calvinist tradition was not just its historical environment but also the added element of Hegelian dialecticism. Even so, much of it was prefigured in the Deist/Hyper-Calvinist debate, as well as in the Puritan Federalist/Socinian debate. The Deists accepted natural revelation but in a somewhat different manner from their Socinian predecessors. The Socinians sometimes spoke of special revelation (Scripture) as well as natural revelation (reason), but in time this developed into the Deist view of singular revelation. The Deists rejected supernatural revelation entirely. They were even slow to speak of reason itself as natural 'revelation', since that implies a revealer who is active in illumination as well. The Deists, rather, spoke of reason and natural theology. The Federal Calvinists - both Hyper and Moderate - spoke of a natural theology but relegated it to a place subservient to supernatural theology. This natural theology was not contradictory to supernatural theology, but it resulted only in probability rather than certainty, as concerns the most important questions. Butler and Paley saw themselves as lying within the general Reformation tradition, with the Deists in the Socinian tradition tied back to Aristotle.

John Gill accepted natural revelation.⁴⁴ "Theology may be considered

44. Cf. esp. Body, Introduction, pp. xxxi-xxxii. See also Brine, A Vindication of Some Truths of Natural and Revealed Religion (1746); Pink, Revelation. Stockell warned of putting natural
...Cont'd:

either as natural, which is from the light of nature, and is attained unto through the use and exercise of it, or supernatural, which is come at by divine revelation."⁴⁵ Most important to this natural revelation is God's existence: "that there is but one God, is to be proved by the light of nature, and from the works of creation and providence".⁴⁶ This revelation speaks of God's existence and attributes but is insufficient for salvation. This revelation was natural and personal before the Fall; after the Fall, Man's total depravity rendered the light of nature insufficient for salvation. Yet this natural revelation is sufficient for Man's condemnation.⁴⁷ Since then salvation can be attained only by God's supernatural but historical intervention. God must operate through personal work, but He must also speak the cognitive word so that Man can understand and receive it (the relation between Word, faith and understanding will be discussed further later as well). The Bible becomes salvifically necessary: "... the works of creation are to be sought and found in the book of nature, the works of providence in the book of experience, and the works of grace in the book of God".⁴⁸ In making special revelation necessary, Gill immediately rejected the Stoic concept of Natural Law, which the Stoics considered as sufficient for all men's needs (whether that includes divine salvation or eternal life is another point⁴⁹).

It is precisely because of Man's total depravity that natural revelation is insufficient. Since the Fall occurred in the realm of Nature, salvation must be in the realm of Grace (which is always supernatural⁵⁰). God sovereignly ordained salvation to be through supernatural revelation alone. Man's will has become a slave to sin; his mind is blinded to supernatural realities; his body will eventually perish. Yet because of natural revelation Man is still responsible. Man's

Cont'd:...

revelation above the Bible (Redeemer's Glory, pp.246-247), while Hoeksema almost entirely rejects natural revelation (IK, vol.I, pp.482-483; vol.III, pp.171ff).

45. Body, p.xxxi. Gill often uses the term 'light of nature' but not Hussey's 'light of reason' (Hussey, Operations, p.379, etc.) On natural theology, see J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.I, especially pp.1-32.

46. Comm on James 2:19. So too Stockell, Scripture and Reason, p.13.

47. Body, pp.xxxi-xxxii.

48. Comm on Psa. 111:2.

49. See Section H below.

50. See Chapter XI below.

conscience condemns him, and the verdict of this condemnation is received and known. But Man does not allow it to dwell in his thoughts, else perhaps he may turn and be saved. Nature speaks of the possibility of salvation, but this combines with Man's depravity to prevent this from becoming one of certainty. Like Butler and Edwards, Gill held that "from the possibility of things to the certainty of them, we cannot argue".⁵¹ Though Gill did not elaborate this much further, it is at least possible that he may have associated this possibility-certainty problem with the fact that natural revelation only speaks of the that rather than the how of the possibility of salvation. Later we shall see that Gill held that God uses the objective content of the Gospel to infuse the incentive of grace into the elect.

Another point concerning natural theology may be considered. One wonders if Gill viewed this natural-supernatural revelation dichotomy in the same way as the literal-allegorical manner of Scriptural revelation. It is mere speculation but one cannot help seeing parallels. The literal motif parallels the natural in that it is readily received without special illuminating intervention. Supernatural revelation is particularly associated with the salvific work of the Holy Spirit, as is the allegorical sense of Scripture. The allegorical, however, is not fully necessary for the foundation of saving faith, though it greatly illustrates that foundation.

This natural-supernatural revelation dichotomy can be seen in terms of analogy, if not also of allegory (assuming that there is a difference, if only of degree). This introduces us to the 'analogy of faith'.⁵² Occasionally Gill spoke of the 'analogy' between some historically salvific or creative act and a divine precept,⁵³ but this is not a term used frequently in this fashion. For the sense of Analogia Fidei Gill generally uses the term 'Analogy of Faith' (or 'Proportion of Faith'). Previous Calvinists had employed the Analogy of Faith: Owen,⁵⁴ Richard

51. Cause, p.211.

52. On the Analogy of Faith, see especially Body, Introduction, pp.xxv-xxx; Comm on II Tim. 1:13; Rom. 12:6; and Chapter VIII below.

53. Comm on Ex. 20:11.

54. Works, vol.X, p.307.

Davis,⁵⁵ Hussey,⁵⁶ Keach,⁵⁷ and others. Gill claimed that Calvin, Piscator and even Tertullian had used the Analogy of Faith.⁵⁸ He defined what he meant by the phrase:

...by the proportion, or analogy of faith, may be meant a scheme of Gospel truths, a form of sound words, a set of principles upon the plan of the Scriptures, deduced from them, and agreeably to them; and which are all of a piece, and consistent with themselves.⁵⁹

This means that the Analogy of Faith is the basic Gospel itself. This Gospel is a governing principle in hermeneutics, which appears to many critics to be a "predetermined plan".⁶⁰ This would follow from the previously mentioned view that not all Scripture is equally clear and that the clearer verses govern the interpretation of the less clear. Compare Hussey's analysis in this regard:

There must be a distinguishing between foundation and superstructure, or fundamental and superstructure texts; superstructure texts and the sense of them are to be carefully built upon the fundamental, and not the fundamental upon the superstructure, as the corrupt manner of some is.⁶¹

It is possible that Hussey, who rejected allegorical hermeneutics,⁶²

55. Davis, The True Spring of Gospel Sight and Sense of Sin, p.iii.

56. Glory, p.860.

57. Exposition of the Parables, pp.xi-xii. The Analogy of Faith was also held by other later Hyper-Calvinists, such as Philpot, Eternal Sonship, p.58; Sermons, vol.III, p.104; Meditations, vol.III, p.76; J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.II, pp.230-233; Palmer, What is the Analogy of Faith?; Stevens, Help, vol.I, p.222; Atkinson, Faith, pp.62-64; Styles, Manual, p.111; Pink, Elijah, p.235; Perseverance, p.101. Gadsby accepted it but sometimes interpreted Romans 12:6 to mean the amount of faith (Works, vol.I, p.299).

58. Body, Introduction, p.xxvi.

59. Comm on Rom. 12:6. Cf. Body, Introduction, p.xxvi; Song, pp.46-47, 141. Other definitions: "the general harmony of truth which is revealed to faith" (Philpot, Answers, p.154); "that system of truth which God has made known unto His people" (Pink, Interpretations, p.31); "the general tenor of Scripture" (Pink, Practical, p.116).

60. Seymour, pp.139-140. So also Spurgeon in Iain Murray, The Forgotten Spurgeon, p.46; Clipsham, p.102; Thornton, p.94. On Gill's use of the Analogy of Faith in hermeneutics, see Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, pp.83, 300.

61. Hussey, Operations, p.192.

62. Hussey, Glory, p.129. Cf. Toon, HC, p.79.

is charging the allegorists with reversing the use of the Analogy of Faith. His sentiments are obvious and deserve mention. If allegorists such as Gill base a doctrine only upon the interpretation of an allegorical Scripture verse or the allegorical interpretation of a verse, and use that doctrine as part of the basic Analogy of Faith to govern hermeneutics, then it is clear that the allegorists are guilty of inconsistency and self-contradiction. It is one of the main propositions of this present thesis that Federalists and Hyper-Calvinists are guilty in this respect in their retention of the doctrine of limited atonement. The latter are particularly guilty because they make limited atonement an essential doctrine of the Gospel, thus negating a free offer; while other Federalists do not always make it a part of the basic Gospel, yet the implications are quite similar with respect to the free offer. The former are consistent to reject a free offer, but are also wrong in doing so; the latter are inconsistent in their claiming to give a free offer based on a limited atonement, but are correct in saying that a free offer is necessary.

The Analogy of Faith is employed by Gill not only in hermeneutics but also in theological methodology. This constitutes an A Priori approach. The basic Gospel is the foundation for the secondary and tertiary doctrines. Sometimes it seems that Gill does not accept this distinction of essential and non-essential doctrines. Yet it is usually clear that he did. However, Gill never defines this basic Gospel or names all the essential doctrines in any single place. In Chapter VIII we shall list the ones he does enumerate. It is obvious that Gill's basic Gospel includes several doctrines generally associated with the secret will of God, including all of the 'five points'.⁶³ Puritan Federalists seem to have been divided over what constitutes the basic Gospel but the leading ones tended to over-emphasize the 'five points' and vigorously defended them against Amyraldian 'four pointers' as well as Arminians. Many would not accept Augustine's dictum: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity". Compare Gill's words:

... the doctrine of faith ... should be earnestly contended for ... not only the fundamentals, but the lesser matters of faith; and not things essential only, but also what are

63. Cf. De Jong, The Well-Meant Gospel Offer, pp.52, 54 and especially p.113.

64. E.g., cf. Body, Introduction, p.xxvi. Cf. also Clipsham, p.102.

circumstantial to faith and religion; every truth, ordinance, and duty, and particularly purity of faith, and its consistency.⁶⁵

The Hyper-Calvinists, then, expanded the content of their Analogy of Faith to include their favourite secondary doctrines. Very possibly the reason for this was defensive. They opposed Arminianism bitterly and seriously questioned the salvation of an Arminian. Then there was the Latitudinarian threat, which arose at about the same time as Deism. In some respects it is the link between Arminianism and Deism, though many Latitudinarians were anti-Deist. The principle of Latitudinarianism is similar to the Analogy of Faith: to define the essential Gospel doctrines which one must adhere to in order to be a Christian. The Latitudinarians were usually Arminians and would accept Calvinists as Christians. They also accepted Socinians and sometimes Deists. They so minimized the basic Gospel that one need believe little more than that Jesus is the Messiah. Such ecumenism has been totally rejected by Hyper-Calvinism. Though neither Gill nor Brine nor the other leading Hyper-Calvinists mention Latitudinarianism by name, they associated the viewpoint with Deism and rejected it with such vigour as to over-react and thus put a fence around the Gospel. This 'fencing the Gospel' has continued throughout the history of Hyper-Calvinism in varying degrees.

The Analogy of Faith tends to be axiomatic and credal. It stresses the objective nature of the Gospel and of saving faith. It sees divinity as a systematic science:

In short, medicine, jurisprudence or law, and every art and science, are reduced to a system or body; which is no other than an assemblage or composition of the several doctrines or parts of a science; and why should Divinity, the most noble science, be without a system?⁶⁶

This stress on systematic divinity in Hyper-Calvinism has been criticized by some because it fails to recognize the limits of reason (Nuttall),⁶⁷ or because it fails to compete with its contemporary Newtonian science

65. Comm on Jude 3. Cf. Dell, Works, pp.259-265; Philpot, Eternal Sonship, pp.15, 44; Brine, Vindication, p.88. See Chapter VIII. Pink says he accepts the Augustinian dictum (Growth, p.193).

66. Body, Introduction, p.xxiv. Cf. p.xxxi. Popham defined theology as "The science of divine things" (Counsel, p.168). Cf. Palmer, Epitome, pp.29-65.

67. Nuttall, 'Calvinism in Free Church History', p.425.

(Seymour),⁶⁸ or because it made divinity too formidable for those seeking simple statement of faith (Robison).⁶⁹

One disagreement some have with Gill's system is that his system is based upon the full authority of an infallible Bible.⁷⁰ Like the Puritan Federalists he accepted the Bible's full inspiration and authority because of the 'marks of inspiration', such as fulfilled prophecy, high moral standard, the indestructability of the Bible, etc. These arguments bear a striking resemblance to the Thomistic method of proving the existence of God in that they try to prove spiritual truths by logical deduction. Puritan and Hyper-Calvinists usually believed that God's existence and the inspiration of the Bible could be proved to infidels, though some Puritans stressed this less than the Hyper-Calvinists. Nonetheless, concerning the inspiration of the Bible (as well as assurance of salvation), their final authority was the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit (Testimonium Internum Spiritus Sancti). Calvin gave prominence to this in his doctrine of Scripture and recent Federalism has returned to this emphasis, as seen in the works of Warfield, Young and Van Til.

This internal testimony figured in Gill's theology as the final appeal in matters of theology. We have already mentioned this in relation to the doctrines of mystery and allegory. It is to be expected that it would receive prominence in Crisp's mystical Calvinism. Note his words on the doctrine of assurance, which also apply to his theological epistemology:

... as in all arts and sciences, there are some principles that are as ground works therein, beyond which there must be no enquiry, so also in divine things, in answering cases of conscience, there must be some principle that must be as the last determining principle, beyond which there must be no further enquiry, nor questioning: as, when a man heareth something that is probable, to clear it up, he would have something to come in that should make that certain, and so satisfy him concerning it. Now that which is the last principle and ground of things, as something there must be, when that comes, a man must be satisfied with that, and question no further concerning the thing, or else he shall never be resolved... and so a running in

68. Seymour, p.155.

69. Robison, 'Legacy', pp.111-112.

70. Seymour, p.155.

infinitum, and never a conclusion of the case in question... is there anything in the world of better credit, or rather to be believed, than the Spirit himself? Nay, can any believe but by him?'⁷¹

This is the final authority for Crisp and for Gill. It is the indubitable A Priori of saving faith. It is not the purely subjective presuppositional whim of a biased theology. Gill rejects the previously mentioned tautological system because "a supposition puts nothing in being, proves no matter of fact".⁷² Gill rejects those subjective suppositions arising out of Man's hearts because Man is sinful; but when the indubitable inner testimony of the Spirit speaks about the authority of the Bible, that testimony is not capricious but has objective control because the inner testimony is through (and only through) the verbal Word of God. This is the epistemological foundation to which John Gill appealed against Deist rationalism. This methodology appealed to revelation in both forms through the A Priori scheme: certain natural truths are 'self-evident',⁷³ while revealed truths are self-authenticating by means of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁴ More recent Federalism has developed this scheme in the system known as Presuppositionalism, though there are some definite differences to be noted.

Finally it must be added that some critics of Hyper-Calvinism contend that the methodological error of Hyperism is not that it over-emphasizes logic, but rather misuses logic, that it is not logical enough

71. CAE, vol.II, pp.91-92. Cf. the methodology of another 'Antinomian', Dell: "the faithful do not defend the gospel by philosophy, as is heathenishly suggested; but by the gospel, they defend the gospel" (Works, p.540).

72. Cause, p.56.

73. Paul defines an axiom as 'an obvious truth', or self-authenticating (Bible Truths, p.88). Tucker, like others, defines an axiom as a 'self-evident truth' (Predestination, p.216). To some, this smacks of Deistic rationalism. Note, for instance, the words in the American Declaration of Independence, framed by Deists (especially Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson): "We hold these truths to be self-evident..." Bellamy speaks of maxims as 'first principles' (Religion, p.139). Philpot often warned Christians of the "customs and maxims of the world" (e.g., Sermons, vol.VI, pp.63-64; vol.IX, p.100); and Huntington warned of 'worldly maxims' (Works, vol.XII, p.362). Hoeksema: "...an axiom, that may be accepted a priori, a self-evident truth, something that needs no proof, that is universally admitted" (Survey, p.400). Pink: "a proverb or maxim is a broad principle expressed in a brief form, a moral truth set forth in condensed and universal language" (Interpretation, p.62). See also Pink, Revelation, p.144; J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.I, pp.5, 192; Styles, Manual, p.104. The school of Hoeksema explicitly employs A Priori logic (e.g. Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.657).

74. On the question of whether this viewpoint opens the door to mysticism, see Chapter X.

or not properly logical. We are not thinking of Deistic opponents of Hyperism at this point but of other Calvinists. These feel that the Hyper-Calvinists are correct to posit that there is such a thing as 'right reason' in that we can employ Biblical statements, or truths rightly derived from the Scriptures, and use them as premisses from which to derive further truths. Their criticism of the Hypers is that they mingle Biblical truths with non-Biblical truths. Thus, a Hyperist sets up a syllogism in which the major premiss is indeed a Biblical truth but the minor premiss is not. The conclusion cannot be Biblically true.

For example, take the matter of sovereignty and responsibility. Styles argued as follows:

Premiss 1: Divine sovereignty is Biblical.

Premiss 2: Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are not compatible.

Conclusion: Therefore Human responsibility is not Biblical.

Critics point out that Premiss 2 cannot be found in Scripture but is a non-Biblical assumption wrongly inserted into the process of a Biblical system of 'right reason'. Premiss 1 is, of course, quite correct but the conclusion is not. These opponents would put forth another syllogism:

Premiss 1: Divine sovereignty is Biblical.

Premiss 2: Human responsibility is Biblical.

Conclusion: Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are both Biblical.

This criticism of Hyperist methodology is not entirely the same as that which places most emphasis on the place of paradox and antinomy. Nevertheless, the two are quite similar.

F. RAMIST INFLUENCE

In researching the theological methodology of the Puritans and Hyper-Calvinists, one is likely to come across the view that they were greatly influenced by the French philosopher, Peter Ramus.¹ That he was an influence on certain Puritans is clear enough (particularly William Ames²), for they themselves mention him and used his books. But what concerns us is whether he bore the same relationship to the Hyper-Calvinists who extended the High Federalism of those such as Ames. Surely the fact that we have found no references to Ramus in any Hyper literature is not without significance. On the other hand, we find only a few references to the likes of Beza and Perkins and it is agreed that they were significant in the formulation of Hyper-Calvinist Supralapsarianism. Since, therefore, explicit references cannot be compared, we must see if there are any distinct parallels which prove influence. All agree that Ramus indirectly touched the Hypers through Ames and others; let us consider if there was direct influence as well.

We have already investigated the use of allegory in Gill. That Ramus also employed allegory proves little of itself. That Gill had mixed feelings about Aristotle also does not mean that he was a 'Ramist'. Ramus rejected much of Aristotelianism but clung to the use of syllogism, as does Gill, but perhaps this may give us a few clues.

Gill does not employ Ramus's distinctive vocabulary (words such as artificial, invention and judgement, simple and compared, agreeable, etc.), but he does use certain other terms which both Ramus and others use (necessity, efficient cause, material cause, formal cause, final cause, etc.).³ This may or may not mean something. Then there is the stress on dichotomy by Ramus,⁴ and we certainly find this in Gill. John

1. For example, see Faris, The Nature of Theological Inquiry, pp.187-208; W.J. Ong, Ramus, Method and Decay of Dialogue; J.I. Packer, The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter, pp.33-34; Jens Moller, 'Beginnings of Puritan Covenantal Theology', p.60; Toon, HC, pp.24-25, 68, and 'Supralapsarian Christology', pp.23-29; K.M. Campbell, 'Antinomian Controversies of the Seventeenth Century', pp.70-71, 78; and Perry Miller, The Puritans. The Logike was his most popular book on method and was often used as a textbook in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

2. Cf. Eusden, Introduction to Ames, Marrow of Theology, pp.37-47; Toon, HC, p.24; Sprunger, 'Ames, Ramus, and the Method of Puritan Theology'.

3. Cf. Ramus, The Logike, pp.18-29. On Gill's teleology, see Chapter III below.

4. Toon, HC, p.24.

Gill, like William Ames, often discussed a doctrine by dividing and subdividing it. These divisions are sometimes described in terms akin to those of the French philosopher, descriptions such as general and special, efficient and final, proper and improper. Other divisions are according to chronology, contrast, or even the actual-virtual motif.⁵ Though others than Ramus employed these kinds of divisions, the similarities are striking. Similar to dichotomization was Ramus's idea that "ideas could be immediately distinguished by setting them against their opposites".⁶ Something similar can be found in Augustine, whose definitions of God find a faint echo in Gill's statement that "It is easier to say what he is not, than what he is."⁷ This positive-negative dichotomy is seen in the Westminster Catechism, which lists both the positive commandments and their equally opposite negative prohibitions. This followed the Ramist view that "upon the affirmation of the one, followeth the negation of the other".⁸ Similarly, a proposition (A) cannot equal or be identified with its opposite (non-A).⁹ This is basic to Ramist method. It appears to have little place for antinomy. But again, it can be found in others before Ramus.

As is well-known, Ramus recommended the quoting of secular philosophers for illustrating theological truth.¹⁰ He is partial to the Stoics and Cicero in particular. We have already shown that Gill quotes classical philosophers for illustration,¹¹ but we need to add that he warned against the undue use of them, especially in the "three branches of Greek literature" (poetical, philosophical and political).¹² But this does not mean that Gill was a Ramist, for even the Apostle Paul quoted from secular writers for illustration (Acts 17).

Ramus did not view philosophy or theology as something so speculative that one becomes detached from the ethical or practical

5. Cf. Toon, HC, p.68.

6. Perry Miller, The Puritans, p.33.

7. Body, p.35.

8. Ramus, The Logike, p.36.

9. Cf. Ramus, The Logike, pp.74-76.

10. Ramus, The Logike, pp.94-100; Miller, The Puritans, p.29.

11. Cf. Body, pp.329-330. Gill's knowledge of classical philosophers is seen throughout his works (e.g. S & T¹, vol.I, pp.383-387).

12. Body, Introduction, p.xxxvii.

implications of ultimate truth for everyday life. Hence he often used the phrases 'living to God' and 'living well' as descriptive of true theology. His influence on this point is clearly seen in Ames,¹³ but not in Gill or the other Hyper-Calvinists.

We do not consider ourselves authorities on Peter Ramus, but we have studied the Hyper-Calvinists. We have not been entirely persuaded by those who suggest that Hyper-Calvinist is 'Ramist Calvinism', though we accept that High Calvinism is. The suggestion shows some interesting parallels but we do not believe that they are conclusive for the specific point in discussion. Our verdict is that the assertion is not proven, though with more research and documentation may have a case. But certainly there are definite indications that the suggestion is more than a mere possibility. We might even go so far as to say that it is a probability but not a definite verity.

13. Cf. Ames, Marrow of Theology, pp.78, 81-82, 160, 184; Eusden, pp.37-38, 47-48. Said Ames, "Theology is the doctrine or teaching of living to God" (Marrow, p.77).

G. PLATONIC INFLUENCE

Contemporary with the emergence of Hyper-Calvinism and Deism was the movement of the Cambridge Platonists. Peter Toon believes that this movement greatly influenced early Hyper-Calvinism.¹ This theory is similar to the one which sees Aristotelian influences through Deism contributing to Gill and others. The Cambridge Platonists generally were Arminian and had an even more liberal doctrinal perspective than the Latitudinarians,² with whom they are often associated. The latter, however, were more numerous; the Cambridge Platonists were rather limited geographically and historically. One could correctly say that their philosophy provided the bridge to Deism over which many Latitudinarians travelled.

Neither Gill nor the other leading Hyper-Calvinists mention these philosophers by name as such, except that Gill referred to the Biblical Commentary of Simon Patrick, who was a more moderate Latitudinarian Platonist.³ That both Hyper-Calvinism and Cambridge Platonism arose at the same time in neighbouring English counties is significant. Northamptonshire was the birthplace of Hyper-Calvinism and had received much inspiration from the Puritan Calvinism of Cambridgeshire (Ames, Perkins, et al). But it would be difficult to prove that this geographic proximity caused a doctrinal influence. It would be as difficult to prove that the Northamptonshire Calvinists were affected by any neighbouring 'Oxford Aristotelians'. Doctrinal similarities must be traced and compared.

The late seventeenth century saw a revival of the study of Plato at Cambridge University. Through the University this interest spread to pastors and philosophers all around Britain, though it was centred at the University with a few writers. The interest in Plato was also developing among the descendants of Puritan Calvinism. In a very general sense it is true that Hyper-Calvinism was in the Platonist camp but certainly not as much as were the Cambridge Platonists.

1. Toon, HC, pp.32-33. Cf. F.J. Powicke, The Cambridge Platonists.

2. Cf. the article 'Latitudinarianism' in New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, vol.VI, p.420; (Parks, Dictionary, pp.32-33, slightly touches on the point).

3. Ibid., vol.II, p.366.

Gill quoted Plato a little more than he did Aristotle, and quoted both as much as he did any theologian in his theological writings. He shared Justin Martyr's opinion that Plato had come very close to being a pre-Christian; higher praises were reserved only for the Stoics.⁴ He also shared the curious notion that Plato had come into contact with the Old Testament while travelling in Egypt and that this explains the large amount of truth in his philosophy. (So also Aristotle, Pythagoras and Plutarch.⁵ Gill considered that Aesop, Zeno, and even Zoroastres were Jews!⁶). Plato's borrowing from the Scriptures is most evident in his doctrine of the Logos.⁷

Gill consulted the works of others who were in the tradition of Plato, such as Philo (especially in the Commentary on John). Yet Gill's allegorizing is more conservative than that of Philo. It is surprising that Gill does not often refer to the Alexandrian fathers. "The school at Alexandria served very much to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel; for though it mended the Platonic philosophy, it marred the Christian doctrine; and laid the foundation for Arianism and Pelagianism."⁸ Of course, Gill discredits and generally ignores the Gnostics, who "valued themselves upon their knowledge, and despised practical religion and godliness".⁹ So far as special knowledge is concerned, Gill felt that "the only true Gnostics" are Christians.¹⁰ This comes via the illumination of the Spirit, is based on Scriptural revelation, and is given only to the elect.

Nor do Gill's literary personifications of Justice and Truth¹¹ indicate a definite Platonic Idealism. A similar Idealism, however, can be seen in his concept of time and eternity. Emphatic Supralapsarians stress

4. Fuhrman says that Wesley was partial to Socrates as "the greatest of those who had received the preliminary grace of the Spirit" (The Concept of Grace in the Theology of John Wesley, p.224). As the philosophy of Socrates can hardly be differentiated from that of Plato, this is a rare theory shared by both Wesley and Gill.

5. Preface to Comm, vol.VI, p.xiv; Comm on Psa. 147:11.

6. Preface to Comm, vol.VI, p.xii; S & T, vol.III, pp.249-250, 341.

7. Comm on John 1:1; Trinity, pp.101-102; Body, pp.24, 145-146, 315, 589.

8. Body, Introduction, pp.xxxviii-xxxix.

9. Comm on James 3:13. Cf. Philpot, Meditations, vol.I, p.22. In Chapter X we will briefly compare Gnostic Antinomianism with Calvinistic Antinomianism.

10. Comm on James 3:17.

11. E.g., Body, p.921.

the reality of the eternal realm so that historical reality is somewhat lessened. "Everything in history becomes a replica, a faint impression of that which really takes place in God's counsel" (DeJong on Hoeksema).¹² This is particularly true with eternal justification, in which the elect are eternally justified but the historical manifestation is merely evidential. Berkouwer calls this "the Reformed counterpart of idealism"¹³ and says that the eternal justificationists "debase time and history, as well as God's decisive invasion of history. These people are groping beyond history and beyond time for the real revelation. (They) view the revelation of God, not as real revelation, but as an illustration of the true, eternal idea".¹⁴ This is a correct evaluation. On the other hand, Gill distinguishes between the 'virtual Providence' of God in eternity and the 'actual Providence' in time.¹⁵ One might expect the Platonic parallel to be reversed. Elsewhere his doctrine of the immortality of the soul and other doctrines of eschatology show a direct influence of Plato, for in his discussions of these topics Gill specifically mentions Plato by name.¹⁶

Close parallels to Idealism can be found in the actual-virtual motif.¹⁷ Brine even goes so far as to speak of the two realms of reality as the 'virtual' (potential) and the 'actual' (definite).¹⁸ This categorization may have led him to speculate on the details of the potential possibilities, but he does not admit to much use of hypothesis. One example of hypothesis might be the Federalist doctrine of limited atonement. One often finds the dictum that 'The atonement is sufficient for all but efficient only for the elect'. Even Calvin admits it in his Commentary on 1 John 2:2. This formula often means for Federalists that the atonement is of infinite value and therefore of infinite potential, but it is actual and definite only for the elect.¹⁹ Gill, however, rejected

12. DeJong, p.115. So also Berkouwer, Faith and Justification, p.148.

13. Berkouwer, ibid., p.148.

14. Ibid., p.151.

15. Body, p.278. For Providence, see Chapter III below.

16. Body, pp.585-602.

17. Toon sees the actual-virtual dichotomy as Ramist (HC, p.68); this does not necessarily imply that it was also Platonic.

18. Brine, Justification, pp.39-40.

19. Whether this is the meaning which Calvin meant remains to be seen. See Chapter IX and our appended excursus on Calvin.

this. He reasoned that a hypothetical, 'potential' atonement for hypothetical persons is too speculative, unscriptural and impractical. Arminians and Low Calvinists see the atonement as occurring actually for all men but they add that it is not applied to all men and it applies to no man until he believes. Gill rejected the Low doctrine of infinite sufficiency and preferred a more numeric equivalency.

Confusion over the actual-virtual motif arises because of the literary styles of Crisp and Hussey. Crisp spoke of Christ being made sin, and the intensity of his words were often mistakenly understood to teach that Christ was made an actual sinner. Crisp clearly rejected this interpretation. For him, Christ was virtually made a sinner; He was treated 'as if' He were a sinner. This doctrine of substitutionary atonement was held by all of the Federalists before and after Crisp. Similar confusion arose over the use of terms like 'infused' (actual) and 'imputed' (virtual) righteousness. Both Reformed and Lutheran Protestants had held that a man is justified solely by the imputed righteousness of Christ and not by the infused righteousness of Christ, which Rome taught. Federal Calvinism continued in this tradition and developed further the doctrines of representation in respect to the Covenants. Adam actually sinned, and his children all virtually sinned in him.²⁰ Christ actually died and rose, and believers virtually died and rose in Him.

The Crispian problems were due to the failure of his opponents to see that Crisp used these phrases in order to secure a more intense effect on the reader. Similarly, the charge of Antinomianism was levelled against him because he taught that a justified person is not a sinner in God's sight. He meant that though such a person is actually a sinner, yet God no longer treated him as a sinner. Thus he is virtually sinless. Similar to this is the Federal teaching that in justification God treats man 'just as if' he had not sinned; this view is clearly employing the actual-virtual scheme. Nevertheless, it does appear that Crisp's emphasis is meant to counter the somewhat emotionless forensic theology of his contemporary Federalism. He rejected 'the assurance syllogism' as being only virtual and indirect (see Chapter VII below).

20. Gill's doctrine of original sin differed little from the Puritans and need not be discussed at length, except in regard to the Covenant of Works (Chapter V) and Reprobation (Chapter IV).

For him the internal testimony of God's Spirit is actual and direct and definite; it has more direct roots to ultimate actuality (God) and uses only one means (Scripture). The 'assurance syllogism' needs a further means (man's finite reasoning) and therefore can only be virtual.

In an important sermon entitled 'Heavenly Realities and Divine Certainties', Philpot displays an outlook and epistemology which could be described as Calvinistic Platonism.²¹ The dichotomy between the substance of eternal things and the mere appearance of temporal things is apparent from the opening statements:

There is a reality in true religion, and indeed, rightly viewed, a reality in nothing else; for every other thing passes away like a dream of the night, and comes to an end like a tale that is told. Now you cannot say of a thing that passes away and comes to an end that it is real... Nothing is real but that which has an abiding substance.²²

This has implications for epistemology, for "whereever there is reality, there will be a measure, more or less, of certainty". Philpot goes on to describe how the Holy Spirit reveals the ultimate substance (God) through divine revelation (Holy Scripture) and causes it to be perceived through illumination (the inner testimony). The Spirit's testimonies are always certain,²³ for reality is certain and definite, but this does not mean that all Christians are free from doubt. Even so, a believer always has at least a small amount of certainty (assurance).²⁴ Faith in this sense, is to be equated with illumination; it sees beyond that which is temporal and mere appearances and beholds that which is eternal and substantial.

21. Found in Sermons, vol.IX, pp.1-21. The text is I John 5:20.

22. Loc. cit., p.1. On the contrast between reality and appearance, see Sermons, vol.III, p.73.

23. Loc. cit., p.2.

24. "Does the Holy Ghost ever speak the language of uncertainty in revealing to us the truth of God? (loc. cit., p.3). On the other hand, not all of God's promises bring assurance. See Sermons, vol.X, pp.177-178). To many, this latter passage seems to encourage doubt and question the full trustworthiness of divine promises.

25. Loc. cit., p.20. For further on the assurance of faith, see Chapter VII below.

This, however, differs from true Platonism in several respects. For one thing, true Platonism did not recognize Holy Scripture nor the Holy Spirit (at least His personality). Most of all, it was not Christ-centred. Platonism, therefore, is not truly Christian. This implies that any Christian theology that goes too far in praising or accomodating to Platonism is verging on the heretical.

Federalism, and especially Hyper-Calvinist Federalism, is often misunderstood in the actual-virtual scheme of representation. Rather than a simple Platonic Idealism, it teaches that an actual (historical) event or person can be a virtual representation of a later actual event or person. If the first event was virtual but not historical, it could be only mythical and therefore not actual. Such a mythical event could never provide the basis for a later actual event. The Federalists taught the importance of history. For example, Christ actually and historically died and His death was virtual (substitutionary) for others; this atonement is the basis for the actual application of its benefits, which when applied effect justification. This justification consists of Christ's actual righteousness being imputed (i.e. virtually given) to the sinner. The sinner is justified and has an actual relationship with God. He continues to be an actual sinner but he grows in holiness as the actual righteousness of Christ is gradually infused (i.e., actually given), and the justified sinner can know actual assurance of this justification.

Gill never mentions Plato with regard to the actual-virtual scheme, so it is not known whether he thought that the similarities in Plato's Idealism were among the doctrines which Plato learned and borrowed from the Old Testament. The question of parallels, similarities and borrowing from Plato are the same as what was described above concerning Aristotle. It depends to some extent upon the critic's perspective. The position of this thesis is that the similarities between Gill and Plato can be attributed to (at least) an indirect influence and, especially given Gill's high opinion of Plato, probably some direct borrowing.

H. STOIC INFLUENCE

Hyper-Calvinism has been called 'Stoic Calvinism' by at least one researcher.¹ Gill himself would possibly have accepted such a designation, as he says that

of all the sects of the ancient philosophers, the stoics come nearest to the Christian religion... and that not only with respect to their strict regard to moral virtue, but also on the account of principles and doctrines... we should not be ashamed to own an agreement with them.²

Gill quotes the Stoic philosophers less than he does Aristotle and Plato, but his accolades of them were greater. Like Calvin and Ramus he was particularly fond of Cicero. He considered Zeno to be of Jewish birth, though this is not definite; but he is sure that Zeno borrowed extensively from the Jews in Syria.³ Seneca was "one of the best writers among them", and Gill expresses amazement at the remarkable doctrines of Epictetus.⁴ It is our contention that the debate between Hyper-Calvinism and Deism had close parallels with the rivalry between Stoicism and Epicureanism. Gill may have agreed with this estimation as well, as he implies a comparison of Deism to Epicureanism on the very points upon which they disagreed with both Stoicism and Hyper-Calvinism, even mentioning them by name.⁵

Gill praised the Stoics for their high ethic of virtue.⁶ This virtue

1. Norbert Ward, 'Stoic Calvinism', Baptist Reformation Review, Fall, 1972. Similar evaluations are made by Seymour (p.162) and Colquitt (p.130). Good (p.76) called Hyper-Calvinism "a form of Christianized fatalism", evidently thinking of Stoicism. Pink chides "hyper-Calvinists with fatalistic stoicism" (Godhead, p.197). Pugh, an opponent of Cozens, wrote of Hyperism: "It has been styled, the 'stoicism of Christianity,' both because it builds upon the distorted doctrine of necessity, and because it seeks to evade the realities of our moral condition, and to effect a disjunction between the understanding and the active powers by means of abstract speculations which minister to a dreamy and inane intellectual quietism" (Pugh, p.128).

2. Cause, p.191. Cf. Body, pp.810-811.

3. Cause, p.191. Cf. Wilks, p.156.

4. On Seneca, cf. Cause, p.191. Gill did not, however, express agreement with the medieval theory of Seneca's conversion through contact with Paul. One might have expected him to hold it in light of views of Zeno, Plato et al. On Epictetus, cf. Body, pp.810-811.

5. Cf. especially Body, pp.279-281, 284-285.

6. Cause, pp.191, 194; Comm on Acts 17:18.

was mainly in terms of knowledge and the recognition of Providence, Fate and Natural Law. Both groups practised high degrees of outward morality. The Stoics could no more be charged with fatalistic licentiousness than could the Hyper-Calvinists be guilty of practical Antinomianism. The charges levelled against the two were often founded upon their similar doctrine of determinism. Gordon Clark observes,

It is (also) a curious and to the free-will Epicurean an inexplicable fact of history that determinism, at least teleological determinism, is regularly associated with a strict and vigorous morality, while the exponents of freedom have tended to a free and easy mode of life.⁷

If neither regularly engaged in open sin, this does not necessarily mean that they pursued all forms of active virtue. Unlike the Epicureans, the Stoics were not noted for proselytizing to any great extent; late Stoics may have done so, but that may have been due to the factors which influenced them toward Neo-Platonism. It is a matter of fact that Hyper-Calvinists have never been known for evangelism. On the other hand, not all Epicureans were blatant hedonists like the Cyrenaics; nor were all Deists openly immoral. Nevertheless, fundamental Epicureanism and Deism both stressed the place of emotions and feelings in the attainment of the highest good (happiness). The Stoics, however, minimized the use of emotions in attaining what they considered the highest good (virtue). For them the virtuous harmony with Nature was through an apathetic non-resistance to Providence. Note that Gill expressly agrees with Epictetus on the resignation of the will to God⁸ (though elsewhere he says that he disagrees with Stoic apathy⁹). On this the two schools are nearly synonymous, as we shall see in the next chapter, and the Hyper-Calvinist concept of faith is remarkably similar to Stoic non-resistance of the inevitable. Emotions were minimized in both systems because they denied emotions in God himself. Gill:

Hence the Stoic philosophers denied mercy to belong to good men, and so not to God; and, indeed, it does not, in such sense, unless by an anthropopathy ... since he is free from all passion and perturbation of mind.¹⁰

7. Gordon Clark, Thales to Dewey, p.167.

8. Body, pp.810-811.

9. Body, p.813; S & T¹, vol.I, p.487; Comm on Phil. 2:13. Sawyer, another Hyper-Calvinist, said that patience under suffering "does not mean simply a stoical endurance, but it means doing God's

...Cont'd:

This concept of anthropopathy is absolutely essential to Gill's theology proper and it will be investigated at length later.

In spite of this, Gill disagreed with the Stoics on certain aspects of the personality of God. Gill still maintained that God is personal, even if only anthropopathically so. Stoic theism, however, eventually became atheism. The Providence of Natural Law was the determinism of Fate. Gill's predestination, though deterministic, is founded on a wholly-other God who is not subject to a higher law, whether Fate or Natural Law. Both systems agreed in rejecting the idea of atomistic chance taught by Epicureanism, which is closely paralleled by Deist naturalism (though the Deist idea of the 'moral nature and fitness of things' sometimes sounds deterministic). That both systems accepted an absolute Predestinarianism is nearly all that they had in common on this point.¹¹ But even Arminianism admitted a definite Predestinarianism, though it was more based on divine prescience than on divine ordination.

Unlike both Stoics and Deists, Gill accepted the miraculous. The rigid determinism of Stoic Natural Law did not permit a supernatural Providence. Though the Deists stressed the transcendence of God, their system reached many of the same conclusion as the naturalist Liberalism of the nineteenth-century. Both rejected divine interference in Nature (cf. Deist alarm clock analogy and the Liberals' semi-pantheist divine immanence). The Deists, unlike most Liberals, denied that God could be personally known. And it was they, not the Hyper-Calvinists, who more closely approached an ethic of conformity to Nature as the means to virtue.¹² If Stoics, Epicureans and Liberals tended towards pantheism, so Deists often ended up as atheists.

The Hyper-Calvinists accepted special revelation. Deist rationalism and Stoic 'right reason' both rejected such a concept; they saw no need for a higher epistemological ground. For them there was no revelation

Cont'd:...

will from the heart. (Sermons, p.264).

10. Body, p.85. Stoics also rejected the doctrine of divine wrath, which Gill accepted without classing wrath as a passion or emotion.

11. Cf. Body, pp.284-285. Tucker defended himself from the charge of Stoicism by rejecting pantheism and the eternality of matter, adding that God is the first, but also a separate, cause and that He uses second causes. (Predestination, p.17). See Chapter III below.

12. So Buswell in Baker's Dictionary of Theology, p.162.

from outside of Nature and eventually the Deists agreed with the Stoics that there is nothing 'out there' which could interfere in either word or work. The self-authentication of Stoic 'right reason' was rejected by the agnostic Skeptics because it appeared to use circular reasoning. Though Deists accused Federalism of circular reasoning in the latter's appeal to the inner testimony of the Spirit, in point of fact it was the Deists who employed a horizontal circular reasoning. The Federalists admitted the self-authentication of the special revelation of the Scriptures, but this was vertically linked to the lower form of revelation (natural). Similarly, the Federalist 'right reason' of natural revelation is grounded on that which is outside of Nature, while Deist rationalism, like Stoic 'right reason', was natural, self-contained, and self-sufficient in both method and content.

At one stage the Stoics said that even God Himself was under the determination of Fate. Later, God became identified with the Logos of Nature, and with the Fate equated with Providence; in the end each of these had a virtual identification with each other. Gill, on the other hand, never equated God with Nature, Fate or Providence. Though Providence came closest to identification with God, the divine use of second causes avoided this. The Logos is personal and is Jesus Christ. He is uncreated and became individually incarnate. The Logos is God, though it is improper to speak of God as being the Logos. Providence is God's means of governing the Creation (Nature) and includes the miraculous, His exceptional means. Though Gill personifies 'Providence' at times, this is not a Stoic identification.

The Stoic dichotomy of Nature's passive and active principles is not to be equated with Gill's dichotomy of Nature and the Supernatural. The Stoic passive and active principles were complementary, co-existent and horizontal. Gill saw God as independent of Nature and in a vertical relationship to it.

As concerns the human will, Gill firmly rejected free-will because of the doctrine of depravity. He considered the Stoic view of human will to be that of free-will, even in spite of their doctrine of Providence. Similarly, the corollaries of the Stoic free-will teaching necessitate Pelagianism:

Upon the whole, it is certain that there is a very great

affinity between Pelagianism and the Stoic philosophy; and it is more probable that the former took its rise from the latter.¹³

Gill proposes this conclusion in spite of the fact that he considered Augustine to have been greatly inspired by Stoicism.¹⁴

Gill lists eleven main issues over which he disagreed with the Stoic "proud philosophers" who would not thank God:¹⁵ (1) their acceptance of astrological influence, (2) that Fate is something apart from God, (3) that Fate is a natural series of second causes only, (4) the eternality of this series of second causes, (5) that all actions are intrinsically necessary and none contingent, (6) that man's will is said to be forced, (7) their rejection of original sin, (8) free-will, (9) that 'right reason' is man's ultimate happiness, (10) sinless perfectionism, (11) that virtue can be lost.¹⁶ (Elsewhere he also disagrees with the Stoic acceptance of suicide.¹⁷) Some scholars may disagree with Gill's understanding of Stoicism. The list is pertinent mainly in showing that Gill did in fact differentiate his teaching from that of Stoicism on some basic points.

Some scholars may also debate whether the Stoics held what can be called a free-will doctrine. Few, it appears, would deny that the Epicureans taught a free-will doctrine, even if (because of?) they held to an atomistic indeterminism. The latter saw free-will as necessary for achieving happiness (the chief good). Gill would have considered this to be rank Antinomianism. For him the chief good is not even virtue per se (as Stoicism held), but the final glory of God. The elect do, in fact, achieve ultimate happiness in the final consummation, but this is an effect of the final end and not the end itself. This eschatological glory is also not to be confused with the Stoic idea of the inevitable harmony of Nature.

Finally, the Stoics (and, incidentally, the Epicureans and many

13. Cause, p.197.

14. Cause, p.192.

15. Body, p.801.

16. Cause, pp.194-196.

17. Body, pp.24, 338.

Deists) rejected the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. In addition, they seemed to hold that evil is only relatively and not absolutely evil, since it has been determined in Fate. We shall later see that Gill dealt with the same problem but that, for all the similarity, he reached considerably different conclusions.

In the light of these comparisons, it seems evident that Gill did share some doctrines with the Stoics (minimizing emotions, resignation of the will, virtue, non-evangelism), but it is equally clear that he had fundamental differences with them as well. The similarities do not appear to be as numerous as those of Deism with Epicureanism, and there are important areas in which the Deists agreed with Stoicism in opposition to Hyper-Calvinism.

I. ARMINIANISM

If there is one thing that characterizes a Hyper-Calvinist, it is his uncompromising and vehement opposition to Arminianism. The Cause of God and Truth¹ was Gill's major polemic against what he considered a highly dangerous error, and other Hypers have written many other similar books. These defences invariably become offences and one is left in no doubt about their personal animosity against the Arminians.

It has been thought that there is a necessary progression from simple Arminianism to worse errors. The errors of Arminianism lead to the errors of Arianism, then to Socinianism and eventually to Deism and

1. The phrase 'Cause of God and truth' crops up occasionally in Hyper-Calvinist literature and some students wonder just what it means. Gill was probably inspired by David's words in I Samuel 17:29, 'Is there not a cause?' Indeed, one recent reprint of Gill's Cause displayed a picture of David before Goliath. Presumably Gill was fighting the Arminian giant. To the best of our knowledge Gill uses the phrase only once (in Body, p.832). He seems to equate it with the basic doctrines of Calvinistic Christianity. In defending Hawker, J.A. Jones wrote a small book with the same title. Philpot uses the phrase (Answers, pp.36, 75), and Gadsby spoke of 'the cause of truth ... the cause of God' (Sermons, p.105) and 'the cause of truth and uprightness' (Works, vol.II, p.152). 'The cause of God' is found here and there, e.g., Wayman, Enquiry, p.vii; Bentley, Helper, p.35; Wells, Last Sermon, p.8, and Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, vol.VII (1865), p.198; Stevens, Help, vol.II, p.74. 'The cause of truth' is found in Philpot, Reviews, vol.II, p.346; Aikman, Judgement, p.2; Lane, Conflict, p.11. Elizabeth Morton (Huntington's daughter) said that "the cause of truth is a good cause, and the best of causes; and the cause of truth is God's cause, and a cause that God will never give out of his own hands" (Daughter's Defence, p.6. Cf. p.46); while one of Huntington's opponents defended 'the cause of truth and justice' (W. England, Huntingtoniana, p.3). Stevens contrasts 'the cause of truth' with Arminianism (Help, vol.I, p.19). Bentley mentioned "The Cause being God's" (Balak, p.39), and one of Well's followers spoke of 'the cause of Gospel truth and righteousness' (Dolbey, in Surrey Tabernacle Witness, vol.I, p.1 - the first page of Well's magazine). To John Wesley, the doctrine of predestination as taught by Calvinists threatened 'the cause of truth' (in Dallimore, Whitefield, vol.I, p.311; cf. Button, Reply, pp.2-3). Warburton seems to equate 'the things of God and truth' with the Five Points (Mercies, p.119). Gadsby quoted I Samuel 17:29 on the title-page of The Gospel the Believer's Rule of Conduct (Works, vol.I, p.1. Cf. Wayman, p.viii). Hoeksema used the terms 'the cause of the Son of God' (Reformed Dogmatics, p.577; IK, vol.I, p.675), 'the cause of truth' (Reformed Dogmatics, p.640), 'the cause of God's righteousness, of His glory, and of His everlasting covenant' (Survey, p.360), and several other 'causes' (e.g., IK, vol.II, pp.92, 94, 106). Often 'cause' refers to a church. Kershaw spoke of 'the cause of God and truth at Hope Chapel' (Autobiography, p.51. Cf. pp.67, 69). We read of 'the cause of God at Grove Chapel' (Lock, History of Grove Chapel, p.126); the S.G.U. was sometimes referred to as 'A Cause of Truth'; and Popham's church was said to be 'this well-known cause of truth' (J.H. Gosden, J.K. Popham, A Brief Biography, p.9). Eulogizing Philpot, Marston exclaimed "Behold the constant care exercised by the Apostle over the Churches and the Cause of God and truth" (The Crown of Righteousness, p.16); and Palmer rebukes Spurgeon for starting 'a new cause' (i.e. Moderate Calvinism) instead of following the old one (Letter to Spurgeon, p.1). Needless to say, nobody took the phrase 'cause of God' to mean that the Uncaused Cause, the First Cause, had another 'cause' behind Him (!).

even to atheism.² Gill no doubt felt that the case of Daniel Whitby was a good illustration of this, for after he wrote his Discourse on the Five Points Whitby did in fact come to hold Arian views. These other errors were built upon the foundation of Arminianism and they are but the logical conclusions of it. Whitby was only being consistent, said Gill.

Similarly, "Arminianism is nothing but refined Popery"³ and leads to Roman Catholicism. Following in the tradition of the Reformers and Puritans, most Hyper-Calvinists have felt that the Papacy is the Anti-christ predicted in the Bible. Some have even gone so far as to set dates for its collapse. Gill felt that the Papal Antichrist would probably fall in 1866, nearly one hundred years after his own death.⁴ Many Arminians were suspected as being Jesuits in disguise. In any case, there was just something smacking of Rome in writers like Whitby and Wesley,⁵ even if they themselves fervently opposed Rome.

As Deism is compared with Saduceeism,⁶ so Arminianism is compared with Pharisaism.⁷ Gadsby: "Now this is ancient Judaism, known in our day as Arminianism, which, if probed to the centre, is no less than Atheism; for a God that sets upon such a precarious throne can be no God at all".⁸ Philpot said that an Arminian can easily be a Pharisee, but cautioned that even Calvinists can be guilty of Pharisaism.⁹ By and large, the Hyper-Calvinists have poured scorn and damnation upon Arminianism in generous amounts. Gadsby said, "I hate Arminianism as

2. E.g., Brine, Vindication, pp.404-405; Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, p.148; Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.I, pp.183, 246; Tucker, Predestination, p.105. See Nuttall, 'Northamptonshire', p.122. On the other hand, one critic of Pink's Hyper-Calvinism felt that, "It is just this kind of teaching which makes atheists" (Arno Gaebelain, quoted in Fisk, Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom, p.24).

3. Stockell, Care, p.vi. Pink: "Arminianism is a daughter of Rome" (Comfort, p.81). Popham agreed with Toplady: "Arminianism is the spawn of Popery" (Counsel, p.94).

4. See Chapter III, Section I.

5. Wesley reprinted Whitby's Discourse in the Arminian Magazine but did not subscribe to Whitby's Arianism (Coppedge, p.25). On Wesley, see Chapter VIII, Section A below.

6. See Section E above.

7. E.g., Body, Introduction, p.xxxv.

8. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.196. Philpot: "The Arminian makes free-will his god" (Sermons, vol.I, p.101). Gadsby also thought that "Adam was the first Arminian, and the first which I call a Low Arminian" (Sermons, p.186). On the varieties of Arminianism, see Chapter XII below.

9. Sermons, vol.VI, p.71 (Cf. vol.X, p.51).

I hate Satan himself".¹⁰ Irons felt that "Arminianism is the curse of the world, Arminianism has peopled hell with millions".¹¹ And Hoeksema declared that "Arminianism, no matter what form it may assume, is essentially humanism, pelagianism, individualism, nominalism".¹²

There is disagreement about whether Arminians are true Christians. Some Hypers felt that they could be,¹³ others strictly denied this.¹⁴ But in any case, they posed a threat which must be opposed at all costs. Engelsma suggests that Hyper-Calvinism arose as an over-reaction against Arminianism, while maintaining that "The Reformed faith has always been characterized by a refusal to become reactionary".¹⁵ But Engelsma fails to see that 'the Reformed faith' as he sees it (i.e., through Hoeksema-tinted spectacles) is Hyper-Calvinist with only a few small differences with the Baptist Hypers. We agree that this branch of Calvinism is reactionary, but add that those involved in it are so caught up in the fervency of their defence that they fail to see that they are not only reacting against Arminianism but also against other forms of Calvinism - even that of Calvin himself.

Toon and others suggest that Arminianism was the enemy to which the Hypers showed the greatest animosity,¹⁶ and we partly agree. But there is more. They also greatly oppose those lesser Calvinists who are,

10. Sermons, p.366. Gadsby said that he "paid no more regard to offending Arminians and Fullers than he would to Satan and his angels" (John Gadsby, Memoir, p.103) and considered Arminianism to be little better than 'heathenism' (Ibid., p.55. Cf. p.65).

11. Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.217.

12. Hoeksema, TK, vol.II, p.190. Also: "Arminianism is, in principle, nothing but modernism" (TK, vol.I, p.542). Hyper-Calvinists, of course, resisted the inroads of nineteenth-century German liberalism (e.g. Hoeksema, TK, vol.I, p.129), but so did the High and Low Calvinists.

13. Cf. Hoeksema, Voice, p.812. Here he is merely being neutral on the question, whereas elsewhere he strongly implies that Arminians are not Christians. Wilks (p.369) seems to accept them as brothers, howbeit exceedingly dangerous ones. See further in Chapters VIII and XII.

14. Gill strongly implies this in Comm on Deut. 32:29. Gadsby felt that Arminianism is blasphemy and stated, "I am sure there is no man in the world who is an Arminian in his heart who is alive to God" (Works, vol.I, pp.183-184). Pink felt that many Arminian missionaries preached "another gospel" (Godhead, p.201).

15. Engelsma, p.127 (cf. pp.12, 15, 131).

16. Toon, HC, p.133. Spurgeon wrote of Gill, "He hunts Arminianism" (Commenting and Commentaries, p.9). Good says that many Arminians are prone to 'Calviphobia'; we suggest that some Calvinists are equally prone to 'Arminiaphobia' (Good, Are Baptists Calvinists?, p.69).

from their perspective, semi-Arminian. For example, they would admit that Deism is technically more apostate than Arminianism, but it was more consistent. Therefore Huntington could exclaim "I would rather be a Deist than an Arminian".¹⁷ That which opens the door to error is a greater error. Carrying this further, they see that Moderate Calvinism leads to Arminianism¹⁸ and therefore it is to be resisted even more than Arminianism. Consequently, the critics of Hyper-Calvinism (such as Fuller and Spurgeon) are seen as extremely dangerous. Speaking of 'offer' Calvinists, Homer Hoeksema says, "No, in this respect I would far prefer to be a consistent Arminian. For the Arminian, though he is wrong, is at least consistently wrong".¹⁹ Wells condemned those 'professed Calvinists' who believed in Duty Faith: "these approach nearest the truth, and are therefore the most cunning and dangerous of our foes".²⁰ Herman Hoeksema confessed, "I would rather be an all-out modernist than be pseudo-Reformed, wavering on Arminianism".²¹

The Hyper-Calvinist rejects that there can be any middle ground between Truth and Error, and we would agree so far as that goes. But they leave it there and fail to see that those who may be in error on some points do not always carry those errors to their logical conclusions. Moreover, as we shall see throughout this thesis, the Hyper-Calvinists are so coloured by a spirit of reactionism that they fail to maintain the balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility - even when they themselves claim to be protecting the balance. Arminianism is seen as representing human responsibility, which to them is works-righteousness, and therefore they retreat into the extreme of emphasizing divine sovereignty. The sad thing is that in attacking Arminianism they are not only opposing works-righteousness but are also opposing human responsibility. And since human responsibility is based upon divine holiness, they are in fact fighting against that as well. In essence they are pitting one attribute of God against another, as if one needs to make a choice and not accept both. It is also sad that in

17. Huntington, Works, vol.I, pp.362-363.

18. Brine: "Baxterianism leads directly to Arminianism" (Vindication, p.viii).

19. Voice, p.586. He also accuses Arminians of the grossest deceit (e.g., Voice, p.533).

20. Well, Moral Government, p.7. Also: "You might as well give me heathenism as give me Arminianism; you might as well give me popery as give me duty-faithism" (Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, 1863, p.10; quoted in Oliver, 'Survey', pp.15-16). Wilks: "modern Calvinists ... are in fact my bitterest, if not my only enemies" (p.75).

21. Quoted in Gertrude Hoeksema, Therefore I Have Spoken, p.58.

their energetic, almost obsessive defence of the sovereignty of God, they have convinced themselves that this is honouring to the doctrine itself. It is clear that it is not. True Calvinism holds the two complementary doctrines of sovereignty and responsibility in balance, but both of them become monsters when separated from each other. Hence, Arminianism is in error, but so is Hyper-Calvinism.

True Calvinism keeps these two in balance and is a middle scheme between the extremes. The two extremes over-emphasize their aspect of the truth when they should accept that the other extreme has a portion of the truth, the very portion which they themselves are rejecting because the other faction is over-emphasizing it. But the Hyper-Calvinists reject this intermediate view.²² They deny that Arminianism has an aspect of the truth which they themselves lack. Instead, Arminians are seen as introducing gross error. It is not a matter of balance or emphasis, they claim, but of protecting the truth.

We might add that this same outlook is shared by the High Calvinists as well, only to a lesser degree. For example, before there even was such a thing as Hyper-Calvinism, there was Calvinism. Then two factions appeared, Arminianism and High Calvinism. Low Calvinism tried to reconcile these factions, but both factions turned in vehement opposition on the middle party. They over-reacted into Socinianism and then Deism on the one hand and Antinomianism and then Hyper-Calvinism on the other.²³ This process can be seen, for example, in the 1640's

22. Homer Hoeksema is a good illustration of this perspective (e.g., Voice, p.182).

23. It has often been suggested that Crisp arrived at his Antinomianism by over-reacting against his Arminian background (e.g., Brook, Lives of the Puritans, vol.II, p.473). Kendall believes that the Westminster Assembly reacted against both Arminianism and Antinomianism, thereby arriving at the definitive presentation of High Calvinism. While this is basically a sound thesis, we would point out that Westminster's High Calvinism had more in common with Crisp's Antinomian Calvinism than it did with Arminianism. (See Chapter X below.) Moreover, Westminster rejected and reacted against the Low Calvinism of Amyraldianism and Bishop Davenant. If Westminster's High Calvinism is to be placed anywhere, it is placed equally between Amyraldianism and Antinomianism. Several writers have felt that Hyper-Calvinism arose as a reaction against Arminianism (e.g., Hulse, Free Offer, p.14; Engelsma, pp.12, 15). Low Calvinists follow Baxter's view that, as Packer puts it, Arminianism "represented an extreme reaction against Calvinism; and the doctrine of limited atonement represented an extreme of reaction against Arminianism" (Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter, p.261). To a certain extent, Low Calvinists sometimes prefer to speak of those Calvinists who believe in limited atonement as 'Anti-Arminians' rather than 'Calvinists'. Further comment along these lines will be found in Chapters VIII and XII below.

and the 1690's. It is our contention that Low Calvinism has been in the middle. It has also had the most conciliatory, non-reactive spirit.

CHAPTER III

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

A. ANTHROPOPATHY

One scholar who wrote about Gill's theology observed that "His whole theology was centred about the sovereignty of God".¹ This is a correct estimate, for any student can easily see that Gill devotes an enormous amount of space in his writings to discussing the doctrines of divine sovereignty. Indeed, his doctrine of sovereignty is foundational to his Theology proper, and an understanding of it is absolutely essential to understand Gill's thought in the way in which he himself meant it to be understood.

The idea of anthropopathy is particularly fundamental to his doctrine of sovereignty. This concept is often confused with anthropomorphism and Gill accepted that as well. Anthropomorphism is the manner in which finite Man understands the infinite God and the way in which the incomprehensible God reveals Himself to Man. It is analogical in nature and is similar to the literary device called prosopopoeia, by which, as Gill says, inanimate things are "represented as persons; as if they were animate, sensible, and living".² Prosopopoeia is the personification which speaks of sub-humans as humans, whereas anthropomorphism speaks of supra-humans as humans or human-like. Anthropopathy (sometimes called anthropopathism) is, properly speaking, the branch of anthropomorphism concerned with emotions, feelings and passions. At times Gill uses the two synonymously, but he generally prefers to use the term anthropopathy.

1. Reed, Historical Study, p.51. One often reads that the fundamental doctrine of Calvinism is the divine ordination of all things. Cf. Cunningham, Reformers, pp.431-433; Custance, p.77; Ben Warburton, Calvinism, pp.63, 66; Chilvers, p.10. Irons considered the doctrine of the sovereignty of God to be the central doctrine of Christianity (Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.58). Occasionally one reads of a suggestion (e.g., Rice, Hell, p.95) that Hyper-Calvinism can be defined in terms of this aspect of sovereignty, but this overlooks the other varieties of Calvinism.

2. Comm on Psa. 57:8. Cf. on Isa. 14:8, Hosea 2:21.

The use of anthropopathy in theology reveals much about one's concept of the nature of God in Himself and the manner in which He reveals Himself to Man, and also much about the nature of Man and the way in which men receive the revelation of God. It plays a large part in Gill's theology because of his insistence upon the transcendence and wholly-otherness of God. It assumes that "some things are done by God similar to what are done by men"³ and are "somewhat similar to what men say".⁴ It parallels allegorization in that it is "a figurative and improper sense"⁵ which is not to be taken literally. When Scripture speaks of God seeing or repenting, we are not to assume that God has a physical body with physical eyes, nor that He actually feels the pain of grief.

The phrase 'after the manner of men' is the one which Gill usually employs to describe some divine attribute or action anthropopathically, and it is found dozens of times and in all areas of his writings. It is found in the Authorized Version of Galatians 3:15, Romans 6:19 and I Corinthians 15:32 (cf. Romans 3:5, I Corinthians 9:8); but it is unlikely that Gill used it in the precise way in which the Apostle Paul used the term. The Puritans often used anthropopathy. Ames explains its use:

Since the things which pertain to God must be explained in a human way, a manner of speaking called ... anthropopathy, is frequently used. And because they are explained in our way for human comprehension, many things are spoken of God according to our own conceiving rather than according to his real nature.⁶

According to Gill, when Scripture speaks "according to our apprehension of things",⁷ this does not mean that Scripture errs.

3. Body, p.124.

4. Body, p.492.

5. Cause, p.155. Cf. Body, p.40.

6. Ames, p.83. Cf. Calvin, Tracts and Treatises, vol.III, p.424; Sermons on Timothy, pp.152-153; Twisse, Riches, Part I, p.182; Thomas Adams, Works, vol.I, p.343; Bellamy, Works, vol.II, pp.214-216; Amy Paul, Religions, pp.426-427. On anthropomorphism, cf. Pink, Reconciliation, p.27; J.C. Rylands, Sr., Contemplations, vol.II, pp.397-399; Hoeksema, IK, vol.III, pp.161-162. Pink sometimes used the synonymous term 'anthropologism', meaning 'God speaking in human language' (e.g., Sovereignty, p.241).

7. Body, p.40.

Scripture was written by men but, though to err is human, to be human does not necessarily mean that all one says is error. This is especially true in Scripture because of the divine inspiration of the Bible. Rather, anthropopathy is used because finite Man cannot exhaustively conceive of the infinite God. Nor does this mean that Man can objectively conceive of God without divine revelation or illumination. Natural revelation convinces all men of the nature and existence of God; therefore no man is a tabula rasa concerning the existence of God. This revelation is received externally through nature and internally in the human conscience, and by both these means God speaks anthropopathically of Himself. The same is true of the special revelation of God, even the full and personal revelation in Christ. The Incarnate Word is something of an anthropopathic revelation of God, for even though He was personally present He was limited in some respects by His physical body. Men who saw Him on earth could see His soul and divinity only in an indirect way; only at the Consummation will any man see Him in His fullness. There will be no anthropopathic revelation in Heaven, at least in this sense. Similarly, Christ was fully human but without sin. Since no man can fully conceive how a man can be without sin, Christ's humanity is unique and therefore must be spoken of in anthropopathic terms. The same is seen in His uniqueness of being the God-Man.

As we said, anthropopathy specifically refers to emotions, feelings and passions. Sometimes it is spoken of by some writers as "the pathetic fallacy",⁸ and is usually used in reference to God.⁹ Gill admits that the strict impropriety of anthropopathic conception of God is parallel to the Stoic's idea of God in that "he is free from all passion and perturbation of mind".¹⁰ In his opinion, all emotions are basically weaknesses. God has no weaknesses. By a simple syllogism based upon these two premisses, Gill concludes that God has no emotions.¹¹ The flaw in this

8. Dagobert Runes, Dictionary of Philosophy, p.13.

9. E.g., OED, vol.I, p.362.

10. Body, p.85. This concept has been held by most all Federalists. For instance, Westminster Confession (II:1); Dabney, Discussions, vol.I, pp.291-292; Philpot, Meditations, vol.I, p.6. Elsewhere Philpot condemns Stoicism for its concept of an unfeeling God (Meditations, vol.II, p.37). Pink: "The Man Christ Jesus was no emotionless Stoic, but One 'filled with compassion'" (Sovereignty, p.245), but note that Pink is here speaking about Christ's humanity, for sometimes Pink denies that deity has emotions.

11. Cf. Body, pp.85, 95, 99, 102, 124. Note Park's syllogism: "Grief belongs to imperfection; God is all perfect, therefore God is incapable of grief" (Resisting the Spirit, p.4). Compare also J.C. Ryland, Sr.: "It is impossible for God to feel pain, because he is subject to no
...Cont'd:

logic is the premiss that all emotions are necessarily weaknesses. The more devotional Puritan divines such as Crisp and Bunyan, and perhaps even Calvin himself, would probably prefer another syllogism (granted that syllogism can be occasionally used): God has emotions; God has no weaknesses; therefore, not all emotions are weaknesses. It is even possible that such theologians might contend that God is the very source of emotions and contains them in an infinite amount.

Emotions are seen by Gill to be not only weaknesses but also disturbances. So for example:

properly speaking, there are no passions nor perturbations of mind in God, who is a spirit, simple and uncompounded, and not capable of such things; when therefore displeasure, anger, provocation, resentment, etc. are ascribed to him, it must be understood after the manner of men; that he says something in his word, and does something in his providence, and the outward dispensations of it, which is somewhat similar to what men say and do, when the above is the case with them; otherwise we are not to conceive that God is in a passion, and is ruffled, and his mind disturbed, as they are.¹²

... properly speaking, there are no affections and passions in God to be wrought upon, or worked up, so as to disturb and disquiet him, as there are in creatures; such as grief and sorrow indulged, and wrath and anger provoked, and raised to a pitch; these are only ascribed to God, speaking after the manner of men.¹³

In his writings Gill often describes God's repenting (grief) as an instance of anthropopathy. When God is said to repent that He made man, this does not literally mean that God is affected in His nature. God is not actually grieving or being hurt; it only appears that He is grieving or being hurt. In keeping with Gill's vocabulary, he might say that God is virtually but not actually affected.

Gill believes that in the atonement Christ suffered only in His human nature and not in His divine nature.¹⁴ Hence, he can speak of it as

Cont'd:...

natural or moral evil" (Contemplations, vol.II, p.461). Owen: "To ascribe affections properly to God is to make Him weak, imperfect, dependent, changeable and impotent" (Works, vol.XII, p.110). Kershaw: "our God, as God, is not subject to those feelings as we are" (Grace Alone, p.167).

12. Body, p.492.

13. Body, p.124.

...Cont'd:

'the passion of Christ'. To speak of it as 'the passion of God' is Patripassionistic, smacks of Sabellianism, and is as misleading as to speak of the atonement as 'the death of God'¹⁴ (cf. his Protestant rejection of speaking of Mary as the 'mother of God'¹⁵). Gill is correct in ascribing emotions to Christ, but he minimizes them in his stress on Christ's deity to the minimizing (but not denying) of His humanity. Yet he speaks little of the emotions of God the Father which were the cause of the Incarnation.

The Bible says that the Father sent the Son into the world because of love. As we shall see in Chapter XI, Gill prefers to describe grace as power rather than as love. He agreed with the Stoics that mercy does not, properly speaking, belong to God; in the end there is very little love in his theology. He does not really think of God's love as an emotion. It is true that he thought that the emotions have some relation to the will and the mind, but he seems to place love in God's mind and action. God, then, is seen as composed of mind and will but no emotions. Gill's God is unemotional, without feeling, and unaffectionate. The ramifications of this conception of God became evident in his views on assurance, faith, atonement and grace.

However, we must point out that some of the later Hyper-Calvinists did not go quite as far in this area as Gill. Most notable here are those who espouse 'Experimentalism'.¹⁷ Philpot is representative of this position and has some pertinent comments on the divine emotions. In a significant passage,¹⁸ he comments on the idea of divine grief. If God cannot grieve, Philpot reasons, then God has no emotions.¹⁹ If God has

14. S & T, vol.I, p.131. Philpot sums it up well: "As God, he could not suffer; as man he could not merit; but as God-man he could suffer as man and merit as God" (Meditations, vol.I, p.26. Cf. p.41). See also Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, p.489; Hale, Catechism, p.32; and Chapter IX below.

15. Gill would have rejected any use of the term 'death of God' and would have condemned Altizer's theology as worse than Deism or atheism. He would have considered it blasphemous, as current Hyper-Calvinists do.

16. He held that this terminology constitutes Mariolatry and is therefore to be rejected as blasphemy. This does not mean he did not believe in the virgin birth, for he considered it a doctrine essential to the Gospel (see Chapter VIII).

17. See Chapter X. We refer to the nineteenth-century Hyper-Calvinists, such as Gadsby, Philpot, Tiptaft, and others in the Gospel Standard tradition.

18. Meditations, vol.II, pp.36-38.

19. Philpot prefers to speak of 'feelings' rather than 'emotions', though there is no fundamental difference between them.

no emotions, then God cannot love. Nor, for that matter, can God hate sin. But God does both love and hate, therefore He does have emotions. There is much mystery in all of this, cautions Philpot. He warns against applying rigid logic to God. Such carnal logic, for example, would deny either divine feelings or divine immutability, but faith accepts both. Similarly, we must beware of making human feelings a perfect analogy of the divine emotions. Finally and significantly, Philpot warns: "Separate all idea of infirmity from God's love, pity, and grief, and you will see how you have unconsciously perhaps, been mingling natural conceptions with spiritual apprehensions".²⁰ That is to say, one must never base his views of the divine nature (especially the divine emotions) solely or even partially upon mere human conceptions. Men are finite and sinful, therefore their concepts of God are distorted. Our views of God, says Philpot, should be based entirely upon divine revelation.²¹

The significance of this for our study should be obvious. As we shall see in numerous places, one's view of God controls his theology on other matters. Conversely, if one's theology is faulty at a given point, that is because his view of God is faulty at that very point. In the same way, one's practice is based upon his theology and ultimately upon his view of God. If, then, one's practice is faulty, that is because his theology is faulty at that point; if his theology is faulty, it is because of a faulty view of God. This will be seen to be fundamental to a proper understanding of all the issues connected with Hyper-Calvinism, particularly the free offer question.²²

20. Meditations, vol.II, p.37.

21. See Chapter II above. Philpots views of divine revelation do not differ fundamentally from those of Gill.

22. See Chapter VIII. The point is that if the Hyper-Calvinists wrongly deny giving free offers, it is because of a faulty view of God. Many critics seek to define or criticize Hyper-Calvinism in this way.

B. THE INDEPENDENCE OF GOD

Gill dealt with each of the attributes of God in his writings but gave more attention to the 'attributes of sovereignty' than to others.¹ Though he felt that the divine attributes were harmonious and not contradictory,² it appears that he considered divine sovereignty to be basic to the other qualities of God.³

Gill defined the transcendence of God differently from the Deists. He spoke of God's 'otherness' and separateness from the Creation, but he also stressed the immanence of God and His activity in Providence. Because of God's transcendence, Man cannot properly conceive of, nor fully know, God.⁴ Therefore, "since God is incomprehensible, he is not nominable; and being but one, he has no need of a name to distinguish himself".⁵ The name of God is God himself.⁶ This does not mean that Gill viewed God as impersonal (as did many, if not all, Deists), for he held that Man can have personal and experimental knowledge of God. He prefers, however, to speak of God revealing Himself and knowing Man than of Man finding God and thereby knowing Him. There is some similarity here to the strain in modern theology which sees God as subject and not object.

The independence of God is given a particular emphasis in Gill's thought. The Lord is not bound by any law or principle.⁷ In this Gill specifically rejects the Stoic notion that both God and Man are under the law of Fate or Natural Law.⁸ Being under nothing else, God needs

1. Cf. Reed, Historical Survey, p.124. For Gill's discussion of divine attributes, see Body, pp.1-130. Pink's Attributes of God (part of Godhead) has had a wide readership and has often been used as an introduction to Calvinism.

2. S & T¹, vol.I, p.311. Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.180.

3. Cf. Seymour, p.160. According to Fuhrman, Wesley held that all the divine attributes could be summed up under holiness and love (Fuhrman, p.85). See Sections E and F and Chapter XI.

4. "God is not known clearly, fully and perfectly by any" (Comm on Job 36:26). Moreover, "No creature can know God, farther than he is pleased to reveal himself" (Tucker, Predestination, p.130). Cf. Popham, Counsel, p.33; Stevens, Help, vol.I, p.207.

5. Body, p.25.

6. Comm on Eccl. 7:1. Cf. Philpot, Meditations, vol.II, p.28; Hoeksema, IK, vol.III, pp.213, 500-514; Survey, p.75.

7. Comm on Deut. 14:6. S & T¹, vol.I, p.307.

8. S & T¹, vol.II, p.169.

nothing.⁹ "The self-existent Being"¹⁰ needs nothing to sustain His existence, for there is nothing which anyone or anything could give to God which does not already belong to Him.¹¹ He is "perfect and intellectually happy", as even the Stoics admit:¹²

for if any addition could be made to this happiness, he would not be a perfect being as he is¹³ ... he had infinite delight, pleasure, and complacency in himself, before any creature was made, and would have had the same, if they had never been.¹⁴ ... God is completely happy, nor can anything in time or to eternity be added to his happiness and glory.¹⁵

This perfect happiness or complacency is Trinitarian. Each person in the Trinity loves, and is loved by, each of the other Persons.¹⁶ God, then, does not need even the elect in order to be happy. Rather, He has elected them for the purpose of sharing this happiness with them.¹⁷

That God is perfectly happy is to be understood anthropopathically. This happiness is similar to human joy. However, unlike Man, God is not made happy by anything outside Himself. It is more like peace, tranquility and perhaps even rest. It is curious, then, that Gill says

9. Cf. especially Body, pp.250-255; Trinity, p.9.

10. Comm on Psa. 111:1. Palmer: "What is self-existent is necessary" (Supremacy of Christ, p.10).

11. Body, pp.120, 125.

12. Body, p.123. Cf. J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.I, pp.239-240; Stockell, Confession, p.8.

13. S & T', vol.II, p.120.

14. Body, p.251. Cf. Comm on Job 22:3. This independence, or intrinsic happiness, is an incommunicable attribute of Deity. Man is only relatively independent in that he is responsible. See Tucker, pp.201-204.

15. Cause, p.161.

16. Body, pp.252-254. Thus, God loves Himself. Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.258. J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.II, p.400. Man is forbidden this privilege because he is not God. See Chapter XI.

17. Body, pp.254-255. Parks: "God is essentially happy. It matters not to His happiness whether all men are lost or saved" (Five Points, p.66). Parks is speaking of God's intrinsic happiness, not the decrees as such, much less His revealed will. Tucker held that the happiness of the elect is not the ultimate end for which God ordains everything; the ultimate end is God's own glory, but the happiness of the elect contributes as a means to that end. (Predestination, pp.211-212). Cf. Hoeksema, Dogmatics, p.17; IK, vol.I, pp.388ff.

that "he is all act, if one may so say; having nothing passive in him; and therefore must be active and operative".¹⁸ This seems to be a rare antinomy (or paradox) in Gill. Pure passivity and activity are somewhat incompatible. The key may be in Gill's vague distinction between passivity and complacency rather than any parallel to Aristotelian theory of motion or to Stoic apathy. There is, perhaps, some similarity to Ramus's dichotomy of intrinsic and complementary principles. On the other hand, difficulties arise if one attempts to see this antinomy as following the actual-virtual scheme, though there is indeed some likeness (actual as active, virtual as passive).

The antinomy of divine independence further provides that since God needs nothing, all that He does is for the benefit of the elect. Even the non-elect are created for the benefit of the elect. God, however, does not Himself exist for the benefit of the elect; His activity, not His existence, is for their benefit. Men should obey God with good works because such obedience "may be profitable to men, and is a reason why they are to be done".¹⁹ Thus, the Law is for the benefit of Man, not God, though it is founded on God's holiness. The same relation is shown in the Covenant of Grace: "God, in covenanting with men, promises and gives something unto them, but men give nothing to him, but receive from him".²⁰ Therefore, the Covenant is unilateral. We will study this in detail in Chapter V.

There is another aspect of this antinomy of independence worth considering. Gill believes that all that God decrees and ordains is aimed at one final end: His own glory. However, God is already perfect in glory. He does not need the worship of men or angels, nor does He receive any additional happiness from their praise. "What are the highest and loudest praises of angels, to him who is exalted above all blessing and praise?"²¹ Paraphrasing Luke 2:14, Gill contends that "though there is glory to God in the affair of salvation of Christ, yet the good will is to men".²² The act of attributing glory to God does not

18. Body, p.172 (cf. p.33). So also J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.II, pp.330, 380. Hoeksema: God is "actus purissimus, i.e., activity in the absolute sense of the word" (IK, vol.I, p.413).

19. Body, p.120.

20. Comm on Gen. 15:17.

21. Body, p.251. Cf. Comm on Job 22:2.

22. Comm on Psa. 16:2. Cf. Comm on Job 22:2.

add to His essential glory. By worship men "only declare the glory of God".²³ This declaring of God's glory is a mirror-like reflection in which men recognize the revelation of God's glory and thereby show it to others. Thus, "his great design in all his ways and works is the manifestation of his glory to his creatures".²⁴ Similarly, "the heavens... declare His glory; but to whom? not to himself, he needs no such declaration; but to angels and men, that they may contemplate it, and receive benefit by it".²⁵ Gill even goes so far as to say, "nor does he want their praises",²⁶ but this probably means that God does not need their praises rather than that God does not desire their praises. God does indeed command men to worship Him. Nevertheless His desire for worship must be interpreted anthropopathically. Men are benefitted by the display of glory and as a result they return praises to God, who "condescends to accept them, and expresses his well-pleasedness in them".²⁷ This too is anthropopathically viewed, as is God's acceptance of prayer.²⁸

That God is both sovereign and complacent, and that all the benefits of His glory and Covenant belong to men, is essential to the doctrine of 'sovereign grace'. The very phrase 'sovereign grace' is a favourite term of Hyper-Calvinist theologians. It abounds in High and Hyper-Calvinist literature and will be further discussed later.

23. Comm on Job 22:2. Cf. S & T¹, vol.II, p.120.

24. Cause, p.161. Cf. Body, p.120.

25. Body, p.119.

26. Body, p.120.

27. Ibid. Gadsby says that God delights in His own glory, but nothing glorifies Him more than the salvation of the elect (Works, vol.I, pp.180, 214; vol.II, p.10).

28. Comm on Job 22:3.

C. THE BEING AND WILL OF GOD

As one might expect, Gill speaks of God in such terms as 'the Supreme Being', 'the Being of Beings', 'the fountain of being', 'the self-existent being', 'the Sovereign Being', and 'the Being'.¹ His theology of the being of God is summed up in the maxim: "God necessarily exists".² One at first wonders if Gill is setting up the Stoic concept of necessity as an absolute to which God is subject. His use of the term 'necessity' in speaking of God's existence, however, is probably anthropomorphic and causal. That is, God condescends to speak of His existence in a causal way so that Man can begin to understand. Necessity is contrasted with contingency and conditions. Gill explains the necessity of God's existence:

The necessary existence of God is a proof of his unity. The existence of God must be either of necessity, or of will and choice; if of will and choice, then it must be either of the will and choice of another, or of his own; not of another, for then that other would be prior and superior to him, and so be God, and not he: not of his own will and choice, for then he must be before himself, and be and not be at the same instant, which is such an absurdity and contradiction as is not to be endured. It remains, therefore, that he necessarily exists; and if so, there can be but one God; for no reason can be given why there should be, or can be, more than one necessarily existent Being.³

God, then, exists in a unique way. His necessary existence follows from His being the first cause of all other existence.⁴ Even the heathen can recognize this, for through natural revelation God tells men that He necessarily exists as Creator.⁵ "There is but one first cause of all things, and therefore but one God."⁶

1. Comm on II Kings 5:7, Isa. 40:17; S & T¹, vol.I, p.581; Comm on Psa. 111:1, Deut. 14:16; Body, p.29.

2. Body, p.29.

3. Body, p.126. This dichotomistic process of elimination was also frequently used by Peter Ramus.

4. Trinity, pp.6-10. Hoeksema says that "God is, the creature exists" (TK, vol.I, p.388).

5. Trinity, pp.9-10; Comm on Rom. I. See Chapter II, Section E.

6. Trinity, pp.9-10. Pink: "That God must be one is an axiom of sound reason, for there could not be a plurality of supreme beings" (Revelation, p.144).

This argument concerning the unity and necessary existence of God is particularly aimed at refuting the Deist notion of the 'moral nature and fitness of things'. According to this theory, all things necessarily exist; God Himself is under the higher law of necessity, as are all created things. This is not to say that all things have eternally existed. Rather, if a thing exists, it could not have not existed. God Himself is under this principle, though He exists causally higher than Man. This is closer to Stoicism than is Gill's doctrine. But according to Gill, "Nothing exists by the necessity of nature, independent of the will of God, but the being and perfections of God."⁷ By this he means that God's being itself is the ultimate necessity.

At times it appears that Gill separates God's nature from His attributes. Compare: "as his nature is infinite, so are each of his attributes".⁸ In fact, however, he is merely saying that God's nature is composed of the attributes. He further adds that God is each of His attributes and that these attributes exist finally in Him. That is, when it is said that God is holy, 'holiness' is not an entity existing before or higher than God. God is holiness itself in ultimate form. Man's holiness is determined by God's, not vice versa, and God's is determined by Himself.

Of more significance is the relationship between God's being (nature) and will. The former is seen as more basic than the latter.⁹ The distinction, however, is merely 'a point of logic' (apex logicus). That is, the being of God is described separated from the will of God so that Man can understand them. The relationship is to be understood

7. S & T', vol.II, pp.163, 169.

8. Body, p.86. Cf. Hoeksema, IK, vol.III, pp.148-155. S.F. Paul says that God's nature is essentially one; revelation speaks of different attributes only so that we can begin to comprehend God (Bible Truths, p.105). Philpot: "These attributes of Jehovah have not personal subsistence distinct from himself, though sometimes, speaking figuratively, we assign to them personal acts" (Meditations, vol.II, p.26). Hoeksema: "His essence is His attributes, and His attributes are His essence" (IK, vol.I, p.408). This parallels the dictum, "God is His attributes" (e.g., Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, p.227 ; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.329).

9. Cf. Body, pp.126, 141; S & T', vol.II, p.163. Later we will illustrate the view that God's sovereignty (secret will) takes precedence over His holiness (revealed will), best shown and admitted in the case of James Wells. It is sometimes debated whether sovereignty is an attribute. Those who raise this question sometimes make sovereignty to be the same as the divine nature, whereas the attributes are implied as being somewhat lower or subservient.

anthropopathically. Gill:

... the will of God is no other than God himself willing; it is his nature and essence; it is not to be separated, or to be considered as distinct from it, or as a part of it, of which it is composed.¹⁰

Nor does the distinction present the possibility of one contradicting the other. "He cannot determine, or do anything contrary to his moral perfections".¹¹ It follows, therefore, that "the nature and will of God never contradict each other".¹² One may speak of God's nature as the law to which His will is necessarily subject,¹³ particularly concerning moral matters.¹⁴ This subjection does not suggest that God is, or ever could be, in tension within Himself, for "the will of God is as immutable as Himself".¹⁵ The immutability of God is frequently emphasized by Gill in describing God's existence and actions. If God cannot ever will in contradiction to His nature, then He will not. And as God does not do all that He is able to do, so He does not will all that He is able to will.

This raises the question of omnipotence. For example, can God eliminate His own existence? For Gill this is not a proper question. Briefly he says:

It is not indeed proper to limit the holy one of Israel, or lay a restraint upon his power ... there are some things he cannot do; for not to be able to do them is his glory.¹⁶

10. Body, p.71. So too Tucker, Predestination, pp.35, 104. Triggs: "the will of God is himself" (Basket, p.152). On the divine will as such, see Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, p.369; Pink, Sovereignty, pp.297-301.

11. S & T', vol.II, p.168 (cf. p.166). See also Philpot, Meditations, vol.III, p.73.

12. Cause, p.149. Hoeksema: "There is the most perfect harmony between God's Being and His will" (IK, vol.III, p.540).

13. S & T', vol.I, p.307.

14. S & T', vol.II, p.170.

15. S & T', vol.II, p.168. On immutability, see Body, pp.35-41; Pink Gleanings in the Godhead, pp.35-37; Kershaw, Grace Alone, pp.109-119.

16. Body, p.477. Cf. S & T', vol.I, p.306; Comm on Job 38 and 39; Tucker, Predestination, p.201. Stockell said that God "can do all things that consist with the perfections of His being" (Confession, p.6). Roe: "I would speak very reverently about what God cannot do. It is rather a strange expression to use about God, but, in the sense in which I am using it, I think it is right. Can the holy God love you, me, sinners, apart from Jesus Christ? It is just impossible"

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There is also the question about the liberty of God's will. Does God will freely or necessarily? In one context Gill contends that "He wills his own glory in all he does ... and this he wills necessarily; he cannot but will his own glory".¹⁷ Elsewhere he says that "The will of God is only free in this sense; he is not subject to a superior being, and therefore acts without control, according to his will".¹⁸ In this evaluation Gill parallels Jonathan Edwards on the doctrine of the liberty of both the divine and human wills. Gill further explains the divine will:

The liberty of will is consistent with some kind of necessity. God necessarily, yet freely, hates that which is evil, and loves that which is good ... liberty does not consist in an indifference to good and evil; and ... it is consistent with some kind of necessity, and a determination to one, and a vindication of them ... God is a most free agent, and liberty in him is in its utmost perfection, and yet does not lie in an indifference to good and evil; he has no freedom to that which is evil ... his will is determined only to that which is good; he can do no other ... and what he does, he does freely, and yet necessarily.¹⁹

This rejects the Stoic idea of a neutral will. God is not neutral towards Himself nor towards His creation.²⁰ One should realize that the

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(Sermons, p.260). Windridge: "The debt is paid, and I would say with reverence, God cannot keep them out of heaven" (Windridge, p.282). This compares with the argument for limited atonement, that God cannot demand double payment (see Chapter IX). Well's views are unusual: "There are some laws he will not suspend ... not because he cannot - be careful how you attribute cannot to the great God. God cannot lie because he will not" (Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, 1865, p.199). Hence, God could lie if He so chose to do. Most other Hyper-Calvinists, however, reject this and argue that the Bible says 'God cannot lie', meaning that whatever God says is necessarily true because God said it. God does not say something because it is true, but it is true because God says it. (This relation between truth and the divine nature is revealed anthropomorphically). Moreover, they would contend that lying contradicts His revealed will and therefore the secret will and therefore the very nature of God Himself. Hypers are slow to speak about God limiting Himself, though this concept is often found in lower Calvinists (e.g. Sarrells, Systematic Theology, p.121).

17. Body, p.73. Gadsby: "Jehovah cannot, in his very nature, lose sight of his own glory" (Works, vol.I, p.180).

18. Cause, p.8. Nothing external to God can have any effect, causative or otherwise, on anything internal to God. The sole cause of God's will is internal: His very essence. See Tucker, Predestination, pp.162-163.

19. Cause, pp.8, 197.

20. This is particularly crucial for understanding the doctrines of election and reprobation, for God is not neutral towards any man. As all men are either for or against God, so God is either for or against individual men. See Chapters IV and V.

the 'good' is defined as that which God accepts, 'evil' as that which He rejects. Because He is the highest being, God does not accept something because it is good; it is good because He accepts it (the converse with evil). The difficulty arises in explaining the existence of evil. If God rejects it, how can it exist? This will be discussed in Chapter IV, but at this juncture we must investigate the foundation for his answer. That foundation is found in his distinction between the secret and revealed will of God.

D. THE SECRET AND REVEALED WILLS OF GOD

Some critics have contended that Hyper-Calvinists do not distinguish between the secret will of God in the decrees and the revealed will given to men.¹ However, upon reading Gill's works one comes across several instances in which he explicitly accepted the distinction.² The division was common among the Puritan Federalists and Gill does not differ from them except on the greater stress laid on the secret will. He rejected the division suggested by some that the wills are to be described as absolute and conditional, antecedent and consequent, or effectual and ineffectual; and though he accepted the description as purpose and precept, overall he generally uses the secret-revealed dichotomy.³

The two are different on a number of crucial points. The secret will is the will of purpose (counsel),⁴ while the revealed will is the will of precept (command).⁵ The secret is the rule of God's actions,⁶ the revealed is the rule of Man's actions.⁷ The one is eternal and internal (immanent),⁸ the other is temporal and external (transcient).⁹ The secret will is always fulfilled since it is definite and inevitable, but

1. Thornton: "A failure to distinguish between the hidden and open decrees lay at the heart of the Hyper-Calvinistic system" (p.80). So too says Young ('Antinomianism', p.272); Clipsham, 'Fuller', p.102; Toon, HC, pp.130, 144-145. The same is said of Crisp by Buck (p.220), and Brook (Lives, vol.II, p.473).

2. Cf. especially Body, pp.71-72; Comm on Deut. 29:29.

3. Body, p.71. Engelsma says that the dichotomy of secret and revealed wills is a contradiction. He prefers to speak of the decretive and preceptive wills (Hyper-Calvinism, p.97). Hoeksema disliked the terms as well and preferred 'will of God's counsel' ('the will of his decree') and 'the will of His command' ('His ethical will') (IK, vol.III, p.542). Pink prefers 'secret' (or 'disposing') and 'revealed' (or 'preceptive') to 'decretive' and 'permissive' (Sovereignty of God, p.297).

4. Body, p.72.

5. S & T, vol.II, p.166; Cause, p.74; Body, p.72. So too Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.144-145.

6. Body, pp.72, 952; Cause, p.74. So too Tucker, Predestination, p.220; Button, Reply, p.88.

7. S & T, vol.II, p.166; Cause, p.74. Pink: "The purpose or decree of God is not the rule of our duty, nor is the performance of our duty in doing what we are commanded any declaration of God's eternal counsels that it should be done" (The Atonement, p.283). Cf. Martin, Thoughts, vol.II, p.4; and Chapter X below.

8. Cause, p.159. On eternity, see Section H below.

9. Ibid. The immanent-transcient dichotomy is vital to his doctrine of justification. See Chapter VI.

the revealed will is often broken by men - in fact, men, being sinners, usually do break it.¹⁰ The secret is contained in the decrees of means and ends; the revealed is contained in the Law and the Gospel,¹¹ and there may be some correlation between them (such as that the Law is but a means but the Gospel is an end). The one is either effective (active) or permissive (passive), while the other is either preceptive (positive) or prohibitive (negative),¹² and again there may be some correlation. The secret will is intentional¹³ and the revealed will is approbational;¹⁴ the former is immutable but the latter can be changed in part (that is, the ceremonial Law was abolished, but the Moral Law and the Gospel remain immutable).¹⁵ The secret will covers all details but the revealed will is somewhat less comprehensive in its statements. That is, the moral Law is foundational and states the main principles of conduct but it does not explicitly list every possible command or prohibition. The secret will is, of course, unconditional;¹⁶ in the revealed will the Law, but not the Gospel, is conditional.¹⁷ The secret culminates in the Covenant of Grace, while the revealed will concerns the Covenant of Works, the other historical covenants, as well as the Covenant of Grace.

In some sense both wills are limited. The secret will is limited in that God "wills not all things willable";¹⁸ the revealed will is limited to a definite and objective statement of facts and commands. The duty of Man in the revealed will is according to the wisdom and sovereignty

10. Cause, p.159; Body, pp.72, 952. So too Pink, Sovereignty of God, p.297. Philpot: "how can God will a thing He does not accomplish?" (Answers, p.155).

11. Body, p.952. Some Hypers sound as if they equate the secret will with the Gospel and the revealed will with the Law, only the former being our 'rule'.

12. S & T¹, vol.II, p.166. Philpot says that the decretive will consists of 'executive' and 'permissive' decrees (Sermons, vol.II, p.28). Hoeksema, however, wrote, "Nowhere does He merely permit", even with regard to the existence of evil (Good Pleasure, p.63). So too Wilks, often. Sarrells identifies Hyper-Calvinism in terms of equating, or failure to differentiate, permitting and decreeing (Theology, pp.117, 125).

13. Cause, p.14.

14. Body, p.72.

15. S & T¹, vol.I, p.169. Chapter X.

16. Body, p.76.

17. See Chapters V and VIII below.

18. Body, p.73. Philpot: "The question, therefore, is not what God can do, but what God will do..." (Meditations, vol.III, p.128).

of the secret will, for God makes whatever laws He chooses to make.¹⁹ The difference between them is that of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, with the former enveloping and pervading the latter.

An example of Man's responsibility to the two wills will illustrate the relationship between them. Faith will be discussed later on, but at this point Gill's doctrine of prayer should be mentioned. We have shown that he believes that God receives delight, but not benefit, from men's prayers.²⁰ It can only be anthropopathically stated that God is moved to action by prayer.²¹ For example, Gill can use bold language which sounds almost Arminian: "Faith in prayer has great power with God, a kind of command over him; it holds him to his word".²² This refers only to the revealed will, in which are contained conditional promises. Thus, "no man can pray in faith, with confidence, but for such things as are agreeable to the revealed will of God".²³ On the other hand, men must always "pray in submission to the secret will of God".²⁴ This, then, is the essence of prayer-faith: subjection to the secret will via the revealed will. As all that is in the revealed is according to the overriding purpose of the secret will, so one who prays can express a desire according to the former but must allow for a different answer to the latter. Hence, no man can have full assurance in prayer. No man knows if God will answer his prayer in the way in which it is prayed. Even if a man prays according to the revealed will, God may not answer it because He has determined otherwise in the secret will. Prayer-faith becomes but resignation that God will do whatever He has determined to do irrespective of prayer. Prayer is merely recognizing the inevitability of the secret will. All decrees in prayer must be subject to the uncertainty of knowing that it may or may not be answered. For man to originate a desire in prayer is selfish and wrong; according to the revealed will he must pray for certain things because

19. Comm on Lev. 18:4.

20. Comm on Job 22:3.

21. S & T', vol.I, p.227.

22. Comm on Isa. 45:12. Note also the title of one of Huntington's books: The Kingdom of Heaven Taken by Prayer. Philpot: "It is by faith alone that we have power with God and prevail" (Sermons, vol.X, p.4).

23. Cause, p.169.

24. S & T', vol.II, pp.550-551. Cf. Comm on John 14:13-14, 15:16, 16:23; James 1:5-7; I John 5:14-16; Pink, Beatitudes, pp.99-104.

it is his duty. Prayer is seen more as a duty than as a privilege. God commands men to pray for certain things but often has no intention in the secret will of answering these prayers in the way in which He commanded them to be presented.

Nevertheless, the revealed will is a means by which God answers prayer, even if not a means by which men change God's mind. Their submission to the revealed and secret wills becomes to their benefit because this submissive resignation is accepted as faith, which is a gift and a virtue and a blessing. If a man prays, he can recognize that this desire to pray came from God. Since God does not stir up His people to pray without a specific purpose of blessing, the conclusion is that some kind of blessing may be imminent. As one maxim puts it, 'prayer is the forerunner of blessing'. Nowhere does Gill better describe it than in the following paragraph:

Nor is prayer any objection to the immutability of the divine will, which is not to be altered by it; for when the mind of God is not towards a people to do them good, it cannot be turned to them by the most fervent and importunate prayers of those who have the greatest interest in him, Jer.xv.1. and when he bestows blessings on a praying people, it is not for the sake of their prayers, as if he was inclined and turned by them: but for his own sake, and of his own sovereign will and pleasure. Should it be said, to what purpose then is prayer? it is answered, this is the way and means God has appointed, for the communication of the blessings of the goodness to his people; for though he has purposed, provided, and promised them, yet he will be sought unto, to give them to them, and it is their duty and privilege to ask them of him; and when they are blessed with a spirit of prayer, it forbodes well, and looks as if God intended to bestow the good things asked; and which should be asked always with submission to the will of God, saying 'not my will, but thine be done'.²⁵

25. Body, p.39. Arminians often contend that the Calvinist doctrine of determinism negates the command or need to pray. See, e.g., Rice, Hell, p.81. High and Hyper-Calvinists, of course, deny this but they do add that God's answer always comes "in God's own time and way" (e.g. Philpot, Sermons, vol.X, p.15). Popham sums up the position thusly: "Prayer is a sovereign thing, sovereignly given, but it is exercised by a sinner" (Sermons, vol.III, p.252). Cf. Warburton, Gospel, pp.131-133; Beeman, Remains, vol.I, pp.485-487; Martin, Thoughts, vol.II, pp.40-48; Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, pp.169-180; Styles, Manual, pp.276-279; Hoeksema, IK, vol.III, pp.453-652, especially pp.461-467, 468-469, 539-555. Huntington: "Whatsoever God promised to do for a people, he has appointed prayer to be the mean of bringing it to pass" (Works, vol.XII, p.400). The paragraph from Gill quoted above is also quoted approvingly by Pink in Sovereignty of God, pp.213-214. Pink occasionally deals with the problem and Belcher comments on Pink's views: "It is in prayer that we see the union of sovereignty and responsibility in the life of the believer" (Born to Write, pp.62-63). Cf. Pink, Paul, p.293; Sovereignty, pp.203-219. The view was popular with the Puritans, but many Arminians have expressed it as well, such

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The secret-revealed scheme has often been seen as contradictory by some critics. Arminians and others ask, how can God will and not will the same thing? Puritan Federalists generally admitted that it was a mystery, an antinomy, and they gave minimal attempts at further explanation. Often they answered according to the differences charted above. Supralapsarian Federalists, however, went a little further in their explanations, but their answers were basically the same as those of the Sublapsarian Federalists.

For the Hyper-Calvinists, the secret will envelopes and governs the revealed will. The revealed is 'swallowed up' in the secret will (note that this phrase taken from I Cor. 15:54, appears to lend Biblical support to the proposition). It is similar to Christ's human will being dominated by His divine will.²⁶ No explanation is suggested why or how His two wills were distinct yet immutably compatible. Gill may have reasoned that Christ's divine will was matched to the secret will, the human will to the revealed will.

Men can and do disobey the revealed will but in so doing they fulfill the secret will. This may be according to the actual-virtual scheme, but that cannot be proved since Gill does not describe it as such. If the secret will is actual, the revealed will is virtual in that it is based on the actual will of God and only appears to be the will of God.

Gill denied that the two wills contradicted each other in theory or practice,²⁷ but admitted that "it is not quite clear" how they are to be distinguished.²⁸ "There is a mixture, part of the will of God is, as yet, a secret, and part of it revealed, with respect to the same subject".²⁹ In the end Gill is forced to speak of them as but one will: "The

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as the somewhat eccentric Billy Bray (who could hardly be considered a High or Hyper-Calvinist!): "For when God impresses persons to pray for any particular blessing, it is a sure sign that He is about to bestow that blessing upon them" (in F.W. Bourne, The King's Son, p.13). The Arminian, note, can say "it is a sure sign", while the Hyper-Calvinist can only say "it forebodes well and looks as if".

26. Comm on Matt. 26:39.

27. Cause, p.159; Comm on I Tim. 2:4.

28. Body, p.72.

29. Ibid.

decreeing will of God is only, properly speaking, his will; the other is his Word"; "the former is properly the will of God, the latter only a manifestation of it".³⁰ (This lends credence to the speculation that the secret-revealed scheme follows the actual-virtual motif.) He often spoke of the two wills as if they were in fact two complementary and distinct wills, but the secret will was still seen as overriding the revealed. The Arminians who accepted some kind of secret-revealed division tended to stress the revealed will, contending that men should not overly concern themselves with what is not disclosed in the Scriptures. Hyper-Calvinists, on the other hand, stressed the secret will and fell prone to determinism. They came to hold that God's immanent acts in the secret will are partly, if not mainly, disclosed in Scripture (so said Brine in no uncertain terms³¹). This does not mean that they thought that all the details of the secret will were revealed in Scripture. According to this interpretation of the wills, their Gospel becomes mainly a recitation of the main points of the secret will (election, Covenant, etc.); faith then becomes resignation to the determinism of election. Therefore election, being the salvific link between the secret and revealed wills, becomes of the essence of the Gospel.

It must be added that Gill warned that "all secret things ... belong not to us to inquire curiously into".³² Nevertheless, in reading Gill's writings one can hardly escape the conclusion that Gill did not heed his own warning. The warning, perhaps, may have referred to the details of specific acts of Providence, or perhaps it is aimed at those who attempt to know certain things for the wrong reason and end up playing God. Yet Gill himself was fascinated, if not obsessed, with the secret will to the detriment of concern for the revealed will. It is almost as

30. Body, pp.71-72. Tucker said that there is really only one will of God. It is enacted and applied, but this is not the will itself. Tucker thus rejects the distinctions of absolute and conditional, positive and negative, effectual and permissive (Predestination, p.115). Stevens: "There is but one will in God: which is essential to his being" (Help, vol.I, p.15. See Section C above). Pink spoke of 'the twofold will of God' in the singular (e.g., Paul, p.294).

31. Brine, Justification, p.24. Gadsby held that the Gospel reveals God's will of purpose, not merely His will of precept. See Works, vol.I, pp.181, 199. Cf. Chapter VIII.

32. Comm on Job 37:23. Cf. on Job 28:28, 42:3; Deut. 29:29; Psa. 25:27; Body, pp.712, 810. Parks said that the subjects, not the doctrine of election, are a secret matter and must not be meddled in (Five Points, p.33). See Chapter V. Others have warned of prying into the secret will: Calvin, Comm on Romans 9:14; Tracts and Treatises, vol.III, p.135; Luther, Works, vol.33, pp.139, 145, 147; Sawyer, p.223; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.205; Pink, Sovereignty of God, p.195.

if this interest was viewed as the pinnacle of Christian spirituality. Andrew Fuller noted this trend among Hyper-Calvinists such as Gill and Brine:

When the revealed will of God is disregarded as a rule of life, it is common for the mind to be much occupied about his secret will, or his decrees, as a substitute for it.³³

Fuller says that the fascination with the secret will follows, not causes, a minimizing of regard for the revealed will. This would then be a rebuke to those who first ignore the revealed will and who seek to justify their actions by appealing to the secret will. It is not the place of this thesis to prove or disprove Fuller's contention, but most non-Hypers accept it.

Now Gill did not explicitly minimize the Law part of the revealed will. He regularly stated that it was the 'rule of faith and practice' for believers (see Chapter X below). Gadsby, however, greatly confused the nature of the Law and in effect minimized its place in the life of Christians. He explicitly denied that the Law is the 'rule of faith and practice' for believers; instead, he said that the Gospel was the 'standard' (hence the term 'Gospel Standard'). Gadsby clearly denies the 'duty' of the Law for Christians. Gill, however, definitely did not reject this 'duty'. Nevertheless, Gill prepared the way for Gadsby in that he rejected the Puritan Federalist view that both Christian and non-Christian have a 'duty' to believe the Gospel. Gill rejected 'duty-faith' and the 'offer' of the Gospel to non-Christians, but still accepted the Puritan Federalist view that the Law was the 'rule' for both classes of men. Gadsby denied that the Law was the 'rule' and that men have 'duty' for either Law or Gospel. For him, the Gospel is the 'standard' but not the 'rule of duty'. He spoke almost nothing about 'duty'. The word sounded too Arminian.

The Puritan Federalists claimed that God, in the revealed will, wills the salvation of all men, though God does not intend universal salvation in the secret will. Gill sometimes denied this salvific distinction. For him it is nonsense and makes God contradict Himself, viz:

33. Fuller, Works, p.345. Cf. Button, Reply, p.88.

... it is not his will that all men, in this large sense, should be saved, unless there are two contradictory wills in God.³⁴ ... if it was the will of God that every individual should be saved, then every one would be saved.³⁵

On the whole, therefore, it appears that Gill claimed to distinguish the two wills but in fact so defined and stressed the secret will that he virtually minimized its distinction from the revealed will. In many places - such as the two quotations above - Gill does not specify which will he is talking about. Usually when he speaks in a general way about 'the will of God' he is speaking about the secret will. The key is the matter of intention. He differs little from the Puritan Federalists, and the difference is mainly a matter of emphasis in order to refute Deism and to suggest an answer to the Modern Question and the problem of evil. Both High and Hyper-Calvinism held the same basic view of predestination, but the latter school spoke in bolder, and often confused, terms and thereby tended to a more rigid determinism.

What, then, is the Hyper-Calvinist view of determinism? It can be gauged by an investigation of the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, to which we now turn.

34. Comm on I Tim. 2:4. See Chapters VIII and IX below.

35. Cause, p.50. Cf. Comm on II Peter 3:9, Ezek. 18:23, 31, 32; 33:11; Cause, p.50; Body, pp.470, 472. Calvin said that God does not have two wills but rather two kinds of will. This is revealed anthropomorphically, so that men can begin to understand it (Sermons on Timothy, pp.152-155). On Calvin's doctrine of sovereignty and the will(s) of God, see John Murray, Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty, especially pp.64-71; and, of course, Calvin's Predestination (Calvin's Calvinism), relevant sections in the Institutes, etc.

E. DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

Gill continued in the Federalist tradition in holding that "the glory of God is the supreme end of all he does".¹ He firmly believed that all existence and history have meaning and purpose in this end. When he taught that "Christ himself is the object of predestination",² he meant that the God-Man is due to receive glory from Creation. But Christ is not, properly speaking, the first cause. That office belongs to the Father, though the Father operated through the Son.

God the Father is "the first cause and last end of all things".³ In Gill's teleology these two terms are equivalent, since

the end is the cause, for which a thing is what it is; and it is a known rule, that what is first in intention, is last in execution, and vice-versa: the end is first fixed, and then the means.⁴

The decree of the end, therefore, is necessarily before the decree of the means.⁵ To be specific, there is only one decree but it is spoken of as decrees of means and end so that the finite mind of Man can grasp

1. Comm on Eph. 1:6; Body, p.190, and often. So too Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.180, 214; vol.II, p.9; Westminster Confession (III:3), and virtually all Calvinists.

2. S & T', vol.III, p.104. See Chapter V.

3. Comm on Pro. 16:4 and often. This does not mean that Gill taught Subordinationism. See our section on Eternal Generation in Chapter V. Stevens: "In our God, therefore, we behold a cause without a cause, whose being can never be blended with any other" (Recollections, p.7). Hoeksema was reluctant to speak of God as "the Cause of all things, or the First Cause, or the Causa causarum, or the ultimate Source of the universe. A cause, even though it be the ultimate or first cause, belongs to its effect by the law of necessity. If God is the First Cause of the universe He is not transcendent above the world. But God is not the Cause, nor the Source, but the Creator of the world" (TK, vol.I, p.387). God is the Creator and Ruler, but not the Cause, though in an improper or informal sense we can speak of Him as the Cause and the Uncaused (TK, vol.I, p.389; vol.III, p.18). Similarly, Hoeksema does not like to speak of first or second causes, for that suggests heathen dualism (TK, vol.III, p.18). Even so, he can say that "God is the only determining cause, also when men are moral agents, it makes no difference whether for good or for evil" (TK, vol.III, p.20), which is to be understood according to the Supralapsarian scheme.

4. Comm on Rom. 9:21. Cf. Body, pp.268-269; S & T', vol.II, p.66. So also said Crisp (CAE, vol.II, p.60). Tucker: "no effect can exist without a cause" (Predestination, p.216). Pink: "the effect must ever be preceded by the cause" (Sovereignty, p.91).

5. S & T', vol.II, p.69; Body, p.189. Cf. Parks, Five Points, p.34; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.220, 263. Thus, God has ordained all means to all ends.

it. As in so many other areas of Gill's thought, this is anthropomorphic and 'a point of logic'. The division does not presuppose separate decrees per se, nor any chronological relationship in the divine mind.⁶ The decreed means are subordinate to each other and to the decreed end.⁷

These decreed means have the nature of second, efficient causes.⁸ (It may be noted that this division of final and second causes, etc., was also employed by Ramus.⁹) Gill's determinism, one may say, is mediate rather than immediate. The decreed end did not reach fulfillment as soon as it was decreed. God's immanent acts are enacted in time by His transcendent acts through Providence, which some persons (i.e., Epicureans and Deists) mistakenly call chance¹⁰ and fortune.¹¹ These immanent (internal) acts are His decrees. They constitute God's oath¹² and are God's 'ideas'.¹³ They are not separate from Himself, for

6. S & T¹, vol.II, p.66; Body, p.185; Comm on Acts 27:31. Cf. Pink, Godhead, p.15.

7. S & T¹, vol.II, p.67; Body, p.190; Comm on Gen. 40:14. So too Hoeksema, TK, vol.I, p.392, where he associates this view with Supralapsarianism.

8. Comm on Gen. 24:12, Matt. 10:29, etc. So also Westminster Confession (V,2).

9. Ramus, Dialecticæ, pp.28-29. Cf. S & T¹, vol.I, p.299; Comm on Job 38:28.

10. Comm on Gen. 16:8, 24:12, Job 4:3, 5:6, 6:2, Psalms 44:17, Ecclesiastes 9:11, Matt. 10:29, Luke 13:2; Body, p.299; S & T², vol.III, p.103. Tucker calls chance a 'non-entity' (Predestination, p.223). Cf. H.A. Long, p.55; Philpot, Sermons, vol.II, p.28; Tiptaft, p.12; Reviews, vol.II, p.277; Hussey, Warning From the Winds, p.23; Gadsby, Sermons, pp.33, 344; Hassell, History, pp.255, 653; Pink, Godhead, p.30; Comfort, p.21; Sovereignty, p.58. Pink: "The explanation of 'chance' is refuted by the mathematical doctrine of probability" (Revelation, p.34). Palmer: "Nothing comes to pass by chance; for what is chance with man is choice with God" (Baptismal Regeneration, p.3). Hyper-Calvinists have often been called Fatalists because their determinism sounds like a doctrine of Fate. Of course they deny it, though some of the lower Hypers accuse the higher ones with it. See Hassell, History, p.327; Pittman, Questions, pp.20, 36; Sarrells, Theology, pp.109, 128. Tryon: "they consider their own fatalism and sleep to be regard for the sovereignty of God" (Memento, p.318). Hoeksema says that God is personal and therefore cannot be identified with Fate (TK, vol.III, p.539). Similarly, Pink notes that "Fate is blind, but Providence has eyes" (Revelation, p.50) and charges Hyper-Calvinists with "fatalistic stoicism" (Godhead, p.197), for "To emphasize the sovereignty of God, without also maintaining the accountability of the creature tends to fatalism" (Sovereignty, p.279). Cf. Gleanings in the Scriptures, p.181; Paul, pp.259, 267; Iain Murray, Pink, p.51; Belcher, Born to Write, p.62. Arminians (e.g., Fletcher, Works, vol.I, p.411. Cf. vol.II, p.27; and Wesley, often) have sometimes charged Calvinists with deifying the decrees, and in the light of these quotations we wonder if their contention is correct.

11. Comm on Job 5:6.

12. S & T¹, vol.I, p.169. Cf. Chapter V.

13. Body, p.133. Gill specifically refers to Philo and Plato in this context.

the decrees of God are within Himself, and ... whatever is in God, is God, and so are no other than God himself, as to the act of decreeing, though not with respect to the things decreed.¹⁴

Gill's determinism was charged by Deists and some Arminians with picturing God as a capricious tyrant, but Gill quickly denied that this makes God either arbitrary (in the human sense) or cruel.¹⁵ God's decrees are not irrational or sadistic; they are formed according to the perfections of His wisdom and goodness. Yet God ordained all things solely by His own will and not according to the will of another, nor according to His prescience: "the reason why he knew they would be, is, because he determined they should be".¹⁶ Nor does God ordain all that is possible for Him to ordain:

Whatever is possible may be, and it may not be; but what is future shall be, and so not barely possible, but certain ... everything that is possible is not future ... it is the power of God that gives possibility to things possible; it is the will of God that gives futurity to things that shall be.¹⁷

Because of the decrees, then, some possible things will definitely

14. Body, p.34. The last clause in this quotation is meant to oppose the pantheizing determinism of Stoicism. See also Cause, p.194; Comm on Eph. 1:4. Cf. Hoeksema: "the decree of God is the decreeing God ... He is eternally decreeing" (IK, vol.I, p.391).

15. Comm on Ezek. 33:29, Psa. 45:11, Isa. 6:1. So too Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.56-58. Popham speaks of God as "the divine Dictator", but this is in reference to the dictation of Scripture (Counsel, p.53). 'Despot' comes from the Greek 'despotes' and is used in the N.T. of God. In this sense, that God has absolute authority, see Gill, Comm on Luke 2:29; II Pet. 2:1; Acts 4:24; Jude 4; Rev. 6:10; II Tim. 2:21. See also Philpot, Meditations, vol.III, p.73; Huntington, Works, vol.IV, p.67. Pink held that "God is not a tyrant" (Sanctification, p.175), and wrote that "Divine sovereignty is not the sovereignty of a tyrannical Despot, but the exercised pleasure of One who is infinitely wise and good" (Sovereignty, p.235). When, therefore, Pink follows other Hypers in calling God "the divine Despot" (Sovereignty, p.282), he is merely referring to Him as a benevolent dictator. This uniting of the ideas of sovereignty and benevolency is crucial to their concept of sovereign grace (see Chapter XI). Long: "God is a despot. Now despots give, not offer, because the latter compliments the presentee, which the holy God could not do to a sinful man" (Calvinism, p.188. Cf. pp.188-191).

16. S & T¹, vol.III, p.102. Cf. S & T¹, vol.II, p.170. Tucker (p.52; cf. p.40): "God's foreknowledge is founded upon His will". Cf. Chapter V.

17. S & T¹, vol.II, p.165. Pink: "We must therefore draw a line between the absolute certainty of the fruition of anything God has eternally purposed, and its actual accomplishment or bringing it to pass in His appointed time" (Reconciliation, p.9. Cf. pp.10-11, 56).

occur. If they are decreed, nothing can prevent their occurring; they are inevitable and as certain as the existence of God Himself. Gill admits that this doctrine of inevitability bears a close resemblance to the teaching of Fate and human resignation taught by the Stoics.

We agree with them when they assert that, 'all things that happen are determined by God from the beginning or from eternity; and that they happen very justly, and always for the best'; and therefore advise men to give themselves up willingly to fate, or patiently and quietly to submit to the will of God: all of which entirely agrees with many passages of Scripture.¹⁸

Submission, or resignation of the will of man to the will of God, is a part of self-denial... (and) entire acquiescence in the will of God in all things ... Something of this kind may be expected from a follower of Christ; but that anything similar to it should drop from the lips of an heathen, is somewhat extraordinary; and yet Epictetus gives this advice, 'Will nothing but what God wills'.¹⁹

It must be observed that in these quotations Gill is speaking of the secret will of God and not merely the revealed will. Nevertheless, Gill denies that this determinism teaches a 'fatal necessity' which denies the responsibility of Man:

It is, indeed, attended with a necessity of infallibility respecting the event; but not with a coercive necessity upon the wills of men.²⁰

18. Cause, p.192. On resignation, see also Hale, Catechism, pp.74-75; Pink, Sovereignty, pp.226-230, 272-274. Pink: "The heart's apprehension of this most blessed truth of the sovereignty of God, produces something far different than a sullen bowing to the inevitable" (Sovereignty, p.230). Hyper-Calvinists would heartily agree with Calvin, who said that "We must submit to the secret counsel of God, the reason for which is plain to Him even though not to us" (Comm on Heb. 9:26).

19. Body, pp.810-811. Cf. Comm on Joshua 8:6. Gill also commends the views of Socrates and Plato on the resignation of the will (Body, p.814).

20. Cause, p.203. There has been some discussion within Primitive Baptist ranks concerning what they call 'Necessitarianism' or 'Absolutism', sometimes also called 'Fatalism' (see Pittman, Questions, pp.36-38; Sarrells, Theology, p.128). Pittman defines it as "the absolute predestination of all things, that all things that come to pass are absolutely predestined, fixed, pre-arranged, - that good and evil, right and wrong, are all alike chargeable to God's predestination" (Questions, p.96). As it stands this definition would include orthodox Calvinism, but Pittman goes on to specify Two-Seedism as the extreme brand of predestinarianism he is describing.

God's decrees do not at all infringe the liberty of the will, nor do not put any thing in it, nor lay force upon it; they only imply a necessity of the event, but not of coercion, or force on the will; nor do men feel any such force upon them.²¹

This raises what may well be the crucial matter in the whole Hyper-Calvinist controversy: the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Indeed a number of scholars have defined or described this school in terms of its so emphasizing divine sovereignty that human responsibility is minimized, if not negated entirely.²² Some would suggest that Hyper-Calvinists virtually but not actually deny the responsibility of Man. Is it as simple as that? What does this mean? How do the Hypers themselves handle the criticism? Unfortunately, Gill does not address the subject at length, but others (notably Pink and Hoeksema) have defended themselves in various ways.

Pink argued that divine sovereignty must be kept in balance with

21. Body, p. 62. So too Tucker, Predestination, p.218. On the relation this bears on the question of irresistible grace, see Tucker, p.202, and Chapter XI below. The position above closely parallels the famous statement in the Westminster Confession: "nor is violence offered to the will of creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established". (III:1) It would be worthwhile to comment on the similarities and differences between the Hyper-Calvinists and Westminster on the one hand, and those with Edwards on the other; but such a discussion would be far too detailed and beyond the scope of this present work. Edwards's views are elaborately presented in his magisterial The Freedom of the Will. We will, however, make a few references to Edwards later.

22. Cf. Toon, HC, p.144; PC, pp.80, 83; Marston, The Crown of Righteousness, p.15 (a critique of Philpot); A.H. Strong, Systematic Theology, p.369; Robison, p.34; Dale, The Epistle to the Ephesians, p.52; Pink, Reconciliation, pp.133, 138 (chiding Irons and Wells); John, vol.II, p.287; Belcher, Born to Write, pp.60-61; Bogue, Edwards, p.174; Briggs, in Dowley, History of Christianity, p.396. Spurgeon's views are most interesting. For example, on the balance between the two, he said: "I do not think that the truth lies between the two extremes, but in them both" (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, vol.IV, p.344. This excerpt is found in his famous sermon, 'Sovereign Grace and Man's Responsibility', in ibid., pp.337-344. See also his Autobiography, vol.I, p.174). Palmer replied to Spurgeon's accusation that Hupers stress sovereignty in a way that minimizes responsibility, in Letter to Spurgeon, pp.3-5. Cushman (p.77) says that the whole question of Calvinism has to do with the relationship between these two doctrines. Among High and Low Calvinist works on the problem of these two doctrines, see especially D.A. Carson, Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility; and S. Fisk, Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom. As will be seen below, the debate took on new developments with Hoeksema, who was aware of the accusation (e.g., Gertrude Hoeksema, Therefore, pp.70-72, 144). Among other places, see his comments in TK, vol.III, pp.3-24; Dogmatics, p.547. Hoeksema himself charges that "Many there were that emphasized the Reformed truth of predestination, with its doctrine of election and reprobation, at the expense of a proper emphasis on the responsibility of man" (TK, vol.III, p.6).

human responsibility and vice-versa. Neither must be used to negate the other.²³ Indeed, said Pink, though Calvinists were often charged by Arminians with imbalance and with denying the accountability of Man, Calvinists "go much further than they do in the holding and proclaiming of man's accountability".²⁴ Therefore, "If on the one hand the minister must not be intimidated by Arminians, on the other he must not be brow-beaten by Hyper-Calvinists, who object to the calling upon the unconverted to repent and believe".²⁵ Thus far he sounds like a typical High Calvinist, for such persons frequently position themselves between Arminianism and Hyper-Calvinism. But to accept such a judgement would be to overlook certain facts. One of them is that Pink himself goes beyond orthodox High Calvinism on this very point, for he is not content to let it rest in the balance.

This can be seen in how Pink pictures sovereignty as the basis for responsibility:

Many have foolishly said that it is quite impossible to show where divine sovereignty ends and creature accountability begins. Here is where creature responsibility begins: in the sovereign ordination of the Creator. As to His sovereignty, there is not, and never will be, any end to it.²⁶

As it stands, this evaluation by Pink could be accepted by even Low Calvinists. But when it is seen against the backdrop of other statements, the meaning becomes the door to Hyper-Calvinism. Sovereignty is the basis for, the establishment of, and the envelopment around responsibility. For all his pleas for balance, Pink just cannot

23. See especially the following: Sovereignty, pp.9, 60, 177-202 (Chapter 8, 'God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility'), 279; Practical Christianity, p.215; Interpretation, p.53; Profiting, p.58; Reconciliation, pp.133, 187; Hebrews, p.176. On Pink's attempt at balance, see Belcher, Born to Write, pp.61, 116; and Iain Murray, Pink, pp.147, 237.

24. The Holy Spirit, p.165.

25. Election and Justification, p.181 (cf. also p.159).

26. Godhead, p.33. Earlier Pink compared the relationship between the two to the duality of the divine and the human in prayer, the inspiration of the Bible, the two natures of Christ, etc. (ibid., p.17). Carson says something similar in relation to Christ: "The best paradigm of the proper relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility is Jesus Christ himself, who stands in stark contrast to Caiaphas who in quite a different sense fulfills God's purposes. Moreover, it is again Jesus himself who bridges the gulf between divine transcendence and human finiteness" (Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility, p.203). Pink's own analogy of the dual nature of Christ must be seen in the light of his curious acceptance of Pre-Existerianism (See Chapter V below).

accept that the two are equal on a horizontal level. They must be viewed vertically, in which case sovereignty is far more important than responsibility. In bold statements which frankly admit to the imbalance, Pink shows that he chooses one over the other. For example:

When working among Arminians we should not altogether omit the human responsibility side of the truth, yet the main emphasis ought to be placed on the divine sovereignty and its corollaries, which are so sadly perverted, if not blankly denied, by free-willers. Contrariwise, when ministering to Calvinists our chief aim should be to bring before them not those things which they most like to hear, but those which they must need - those aspects of truth they are least familiar with. Only thus can we be of the greatest over-service to either group.²⁷

This paragraph tells us much about Pink's methodology in relationship to the sovereignty-responsibility dichotomy.²⁸ Firstly, Pink admits that it is not always necessary to maintain a balance in one's own position. One is warranted to react to one's theological environment in order to set the overall balance. If, we may suppose, one finds himself in a Hyper-Arminian setting, one would logically be justified in assuming a Hyper-Calvinist point-of-view. Secondly, Pink regularly states that Christendom at large is beset by Arminianism, Hyper-Arminianism and worse; Calvinism is in the minute minority and Hyper-Calvinism is even more rare. This explains why Pink's works so often stress sovereignty. Few of his books could be considered efforts to set the balance by stressing doctrines over-looked by Calvinists.²⁹ He felt the need to emphasize Calvinism to an extreme.

It is no wonder, then, to find Pink saying just this. His definitive

27. Gleanings in the Scriptures, p.293. It is significant that this is said in a book about human depravity, in which Park elaborates very fully his views of both responsibility and culpability.

28. We mention in passing that the very fact that these doctrines are described as forming a dichotomy by Calvinists indicates to some critics a Ramist methodology.

29. Gleanings in the Scriptures could be said to be such a work, and a major one at that. In it we find some of his most scathing rebukes of other Hyper-Calvinists. And yet even in such a tome Pink cannot help stressing sovereignty to the detriment of responsibility, as in his treatment of the relationship between human depravity and the free offer (see Chapter VIII below). It must also be pointed out that though in his earlier years Pink preached freely among Arminian groups (thus explaining, by his own confession, the need to stress Calvinism and sovereignty), his last twenty years were spent producing the Studies in the Scriptures and several books for an almost exclusively High and Hyper-Calvinist readership. Hence, he was 'preaching to the converted', stressing sovereignty to Calvinists.

work is undoubtedly The Sovereignty of God, a book often cited by others for its Hyper-Calvinism. Even in this book he calls for balance, but he himself rejects it, viz:

We grant that this book is one-sided, for it only pretends to deal with one side of the Truth, and that is the neglected side, the Divine side. Furthermore, the question might be raised: Which is the more to be deplored – an over-emphasizing of the human side and an insufficient emphasis on the Divine side, or, an over-emphasizing of the Divine side and an insufficient emphasis on the human side? Surely if we err at all it is on the right side. Surely, there is far more danger of making too much of man and too little of God, than there is of making too much of God and too little of man. Yea, the question might well be asked, Can we press God's claims too far? Can we be too extreme in insisting upon the absoluteness and universality of the Sovereign God?³⁰

A pattern similar to Pink's is found in the Hoeksema school. Herman Hoeksema occasionally calls for balance but sometimes rejects such a concept.³¹ He castigates those 'double track theologians' who accept the doctrine of the free offer and who call for balance between sovereignty and responsibility. Such a perspective, he feels, is incorrect and non-sensical.³² Similarly, his disciple David Engelsma denies that they over-emphasize the divine sovereignty. God's sovereignty cannot be

30. Sovereignty, p.10. Cf. also p.51. It is not without significance that Iain Murray removed this passage in the Banner of Truth abridged reprint, together with several other telling passages which could be classed as Hyper-Calvinist. Those who research Pink should consult several editions of this work. But to give him his due, Murray has included part of the above quotation in his Life of Arthur W. Pink: "Surely there is far more danger of making too much of man and too little of God, than there is of making too much of God and too little of man", etc. (p.147).

31. "For I am bold to say that if in the attempt to solve the problem we must lose either God or man, then let us keep God and lose little man" (TK, vol.III, p.15). Engelsma quotes the following from Hoeksema: "the Pelagian, the very superficial, the individualistic, the modernistic Pelagian ... always emphasizes man rather than God. I always say, beloved: Give me God, if I must make a choice. If I must make a choice to lose God or man, give me God. Let me lose man. It's all right to me: no danger there. Give me God! That's Reformed! And that's especially Protestant Reformed!" (Hyper-Calvinism, p.134. Cf. DeJong, p.81). At first it seems that Hoeksema is merely setting up an hypothetical choice, but it soon becomes clear that he sees this choice as possible and necessary. Critics say this is the outcome of the rationale that would rather make God the author of sin than allow Man responsibility.

32. Good Pleasure, pp.68-69. "On the one hand, we must be careful that we do not attempt to solve the problem by destroying one of its main elements, either the sovereignty of God or the responsibility of man. Neither must we present the matter of God's decree and man's responsibility as if they were two parallel lines that never meet..." (TK, vol.III, p.11. Cf. pp.16, 18). If not parallel, then certainly not balanced. It does indicate, however, a cautious approach.

emphasized too much.³³ Those who oppose his view of the relationship between the two are not merely opposing Hyper-Calvinism but true Calvinism itself.³⁴ And of course, Engelsma feels that theirs is true Calvinism. Hyper-Calvinism does indeed minimize responsibility, he admits, but that view is held by those such as Hussey and Gill but not by Hoeksema or himself.³⁵ But Engelsma's error is plain. The theology of the Hoeksema school is fundamentally no different from that of the Gill school.

We would ask the Hoeksema school to detail just where they differ from those whom they call 'Hyper-Calvinists' on the matter in hand. It certainly cannot be said that Gill and the others explicitly stress sovereignty more than they do. Nor can it be that all of the others explicitly reject human responsibility (though a few later ones did, to some extent, but Engelsma does not refer to them). Moreover, it should be asked whether they emphasize the two doctrines in equal amounts. If, as Engelsma contends, one cannot stress sovereignty too much, is it possible to emphasize responsibility too much? The question answers itself. All Hypers feel that Arminianism is not merely the under-emphasis on sovereignty but also the over-emphasis on responsibility. Homer Hoeksema felt that it is only against Calvinists that the charge is levelled of denying human responsibility. "It may in this light be deemed a good sign if these same accusations are brought against us today: it is a testimony that we maintain the truth of God's sovereign counsel."³⁶

This is not to say that all varieties of Hyper-Calvinism are the same in all particulars. On the question of balance there is a degree of difference, but as on all others it is mainly a difference of emphasis and vocabulary rather than actual substance. Pink and Hoeksema are, we admit, somewhat lower than Gill and Hussey. The latter two are also lower than Wells and Styles on this point. And yet all of them share the same basic concept of responsibility in common. What then is that

33. Hyper-Calvinism, p.133. Hoeksema contends that the charge of over-emphasizing God's sovereignty often comes from those Calvinists who co-ordinate, rather than subordinate, responsibility to sovereignty (IK, vol.III, p.16).

34. Hyper-Calvinism, p.132. Cf. p.10.

35. Hyper-Calvinism, p.133.

36. Voice, pp.438-439.

concept?

"Human responsibility", wrote Pink, "is the necessary corollary of divine sovereignty."³⁷ In a word, it is oughtness.³⁸ Wells added that the extent of our responsibility depends upon what we ought to know. Note that this includes not only that which is known but also that which may be obtained.³⁹ Consequently Wells calls for human responsibility and condemns irresponsibility.⁴⁰ Wells warns against believing in sovereignty in such a way that negates responsibility.⁴¹ Other Hyper-Calvinists say that they accept the doctrine of responsibility as strong as the Low Calvinists do, ⁴² but that assertion has a hollow ring to it. For example, Hoeksema rejects the view that God merely 'permits' responsibility, for that suggests that a man co-operates with God - as if a man could be equal with God.⁴³ Therefore, "Man's freedom and responsibility may not be co-ordinated with God's counsel and providence".⁴⁴

Human responsibility is in due proportion to the revealed will of God, which is co-ordinated to the holiness of God. Sovereignty, then, bears the same relationship to responsibility as the secret will bears to the revealed will. And, of course, the former is more basic to God than the latter. This brings us back to the question of the relationship of the being and attributes of God, for holiness is usually seen as an attribute but sovereignty as His being.⁴⁵ This is a fine point but very

37. Gleanings in the Scriptures, p.85. Cf. p.310.

38. Sovereignty, pp.304-305. Hoeksema speaks of responsibility mainly in terms of obligation (e.g., Whosoever Will, p.150). It is "that relation and state of the moral creature according to which he is the conscious and willing subject of all his moral deeds" (IK, vol.III, p.20. Cf. p.9).

39. Moral Government, pp.16-17, 21. This underlies the rejection of the free offer in a vital way, for which see Chapter VIII. On Wells and responsibility, see his Letters to Theophilus, vol.II, pp.202-223, and especially The Moral Government of God. Similar views are expressed by I.C.J. in the article 'Responsibility', in Well's Surrey Tabernacle Witness, vol.III, pp.105-108.

40. Moral Government, p.31.

41. Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, 1866, p.316. Also "we few poor hypers, do not deny human accountability; nor find an excuse for any one wrong of man; nor do we put the duty of the creature into the place of God" (Letters to Theophilus, vol.II, p.220). Note the last warning: human responsibility is not greater than divine sovereignty.

42. E.g., James Haldane, The Atonement, p.170.

43. IK, vol.I, pp.417-420.

44. IK, vol.III, p.20.

...Cont'd:

important. Sovereignty is similar to holiness and justice but is greater. This is particularly seen in the Supralapsarian scheme. Pink, for instance, said that "in forming Pharoah God displayed neither justice nor injustice, but only his bare sovereignty".⁴⁶

This idea is also seen in the explanation of how God could set aside parts of His Law. The Lord is sovereign and can abolish the Ceremonial Law when He wants to. This is accepted by all Calvinists. Wells, however, went further and said that God can also sovereignty set aside the Moral Law when He wants to. One wonders if Wells felt that God Himself could break his Moral Law. As we shall see in Chapter X, Wells's theory brought accusations of blasphemy even from other Hyper-Calvinists. But the basis of this theory is accepted by others: "God, not out of necessity, but of sovereignty, gave a law, and sovereignly determined that not one jot or tittle of that law should fail, but that its majesty should stand and remain forever".⁴⁷ That is, God can give whatever laws He wishes to give. He has determined that some of those laws will always stand, but others will not. And Wells says this in the very context of defending the view that sovereignty (secret will) transcends holiness (revealed will). And lest it be felt that this deterministic view of sovereignty negates holiness and responsibility, some Hypers have said that it actually brings a greater sense of responsibility and sin.⁴⁸

A similar imbalance within the Godhead is seen in the doctrine of sovereign grace. For all the Hyper-Calvinist talk about grace, they do

Cont'd:...

45. Hoeksema speaks for many in stating that "holiness is the divine attribute par excellence" (TK, vol.III, p.207). Low Calvinists generally speak of holiness being an attribute equal to sovereignty. Hoeksema is not saying that. He rather accepts that sovereignty is not an attribute in the same sense as holiness. The matter also concerns the communicable and incommunicable attributes.

46. Sovereignty, p.111. Even so, Pink elsewhere steps back from this position: "We must not resolve all of God's dealings with us into bare sovereignty: to do so is to lose sight of His righteousness. The unbalanced teaching of hyper-Calvinism has produced a most dangerous lethargy - unperceived by them, but apparent to 'lookers-on'" (Practical, p.216). Beaton felt that certain Supralapsarians "reached their conclusion by magnifying God's sovereignty and power at the expense of His justice" (Some Foundation Truths of the Reformed Faith, p.28).

47. Letters to Theophilus, vol.II, p.202. Wells was opposed by Palmer, Moral Distinctions Found in the Nature of God, Not in the Rights of Divine Sovereignty.

48. Cf. Tucker, Predestination, p.219.

not accept that love is of the same essence of God as sovereignty is. That is, God does not have to love anyone. In His essence the Lord does not love anyone but Himself – this is bare sovereignty. In the Supralapsarian scheme, the order is that God neither loves nor hates His creatures; He then chooses love or hate. This cannot be based upon holiness, for it is completely irrespective of sin or purity in the subjects. It must be stressed that God does not actually love the reprobate, for He has not sovereignly chosen to do so. This might imply that love is more basic than holiness, but one thing is certain: God is ultimately sovereign. In the ultimate sense, God is not love, else He would love all men equally.

Does this mean that God is not ultimately holy? No, for Hyper-Calvinists affirm that God is holy in His dealings with elect and reprobate alike, even if He is not loving in His dealings with both. So, then, this might indicate that holiness is more basic than love is. But even were this the case, holiness is not as ultimate or as basic as sovereignty, for holiness concerns more the revealed than the secret will. In the Supralapsarian scheme, God can choose not to love someone, though in the revealed will He commands His creatures to love them. These and many others difficulties arise from the Hyper-Calvinist view of the decrees and imbalance of attributes and being. Other problems will be discussed in Chapter IV and XI.⁴⁹

Several other ramifications arise from this perspective. One of them is this: man is not free in the sense that God is. This is not the problem of total depravity and free will as such. In a parallel to Supralapsarianism, it is held that Man is not free in the ultimate sense – even irrespective of sin. This is to say that, as God is actus purus and all activity, Man is basically pure passivity. Responsibility means that he is able to respond but not to initiate action. When, therefore, we speak of Man doing anything, this is an anthropomorphic way of saying that God is doing something through him. This refers to good and bad actions alike, though not in exactly the same sense. As we shall see in the next chapter, the only thing which prevents this from being pure pantheism or blasphemy (making God the author of sin, that God sins

49. Few Hyper-Calvinists have discussed the issue in this way. Ben Warburton is one High Calvinist who has, and he disagrees with the analysis we have given (pp.73, 105). He says that it is not Calvinists who are imbalanced on the attributes. The Arminians, he feels, so stress divine love that they compromise divine sovereignty. Cf. Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, p.190.

through us) is the doctrine of second causes.

Another problem is that Hyper-Calvinists have been charged with a determinism which too closely parallels that of Islam.⁵⁰ Needless to say, Hypers deny the charge.⁵¹ Some of them reply that the God of Islam is basically evil, therefore he is the author of evil in a direct way. Others reply that Islam is too pantheistic.

Another implication has to do with free will. Calvinists have denied that man has free will, at least in the sense taught by Arminians. But many Hyper-Calvinists have gone further and have stated that man may be 'responsible' or 'accountable' with respect to the Law but not with respect to the Gospel. That is, man is responsible for his condemnation but not for his salvation; he is culpable for his sin but is not accountable to have saving faith. Thomas Bradbury held this view: "Let me tell you that that high-sounding phrase 'responsibility', in salvation matters, is a delusion and a snare".⁵² But it was Styles who went furthest in this area. Other Hypers have disagreed with some of his expressions, which are as extreme as those of James Wells, but like Wells his basis is accepted by Hyper-Calvinism. We let Styles speak for himself:

... free-will, offered grace, human responsibility, universal invitations, Duty-faith and kindred errors, are not only seen to have no place in the Scripture, but to be utterly inconsistent with essential and paramount truth.⁵³

Note that Styles lists 'human responsibility' together with several doctrines associated with the Free Offer controversy. Hence, other Hyper-Calvinists who agree with his sentiments on these should agree with his view on responsibility as well. It is clear that he is speaking mainly of responsibility concerning salvation here, but that is not always the case. In another place he relates it to the basic (and, we may add, Supralapsarian) 'balance' or 'paradox' of sovereignty and responsibility:

50. E.g., Rice, Hell, p.81.

51. E.g., Herman Hanko, in Hanko et al, Five Points, p.39. For a Low Calvinist view of Islam, see Aikman, A Treatise between Christians and Mahomedans.

52. Wholesome Words, p.19. Most of Bradbury's ideas are found in Irons, his predecessor, but we have not found where Irons was this explicit. Irons, however, did contrast the ideas of the sovereignty of God with the sovereignty of Man (Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.58).

53. Guide, p.31.

... since Human Responsibility and Divine Sovereignty do not simply involve a paradox but are destructive to each other, one must be untrue.⁵⁴

Furthermore, Styles differentiates responsibility and accountability. In an important passage, he elaborates this distinction in relation to the nature of Man, the Law of God, and the place of the Gospel and faith in salvation:

While we firmly hold the accountability of all men to God, we deny the doctrine of human responsibility - namely that men are answerable for the non-possession of faith and its attendant blessings. Nor do we believe that the absence of heaven-born and spiritual Faith is sin in unregenerate persons ... Accountability arises from the possession and enjoyment of what belongs to us as creatures. We are thus accountable to God for our natural endowments and worldly possessions. Accountability is determined by the Moral Law, which defines our duty to God. Responsibility differs from accountability in essential particulars. In it the will of the person is consulted. It cannot fall on a man without his consent, and its obligations are assumed with his free concurrence. Where there is no response, there is no responsibility; for to respond is essential to the creation of responsibility. Everyone bound under a responsibility is bound by his own free act ... The absence of Faith is not sin.⁵⁵

What is the Low Calvinist evaluation of the Hyper-Calvinist position respecting the pre-eminence of sovereignty and the secret will over responsibility and the revealed will? Firstly, Low Calvinists maintain that there is a perfect and equal, howbeit inexplicable, balance between the two. What God has joined together, let no man put asunder. They point out that all positions claim that theirs is the balanced one, but two questions arise from this. One is this: if Hyper-Calvinists maintain the balance, why are they never accused of over-emphasizing responsibility, but rather sovereignty? (Similarly, why are Arminians always accused of over-emphasizing responsibility but never sovereignty?) The second is this: since virtually all parties claim to maintain a balance, the solution is not to be found merely in comparing the systems in their relationships with each other but by an objective and believing investigation of Scripture. And which one is Scriptural

54. Guide, p.86. On the problem of harmonizing sovereignty and responsibility, cf. pp.85-87.

55. Manual, p.203. Further discussion of the distinctions of responsibility, accountability, obligation and duty are found in Chapters VIII and X.

after all?

As we indicated in Chapter II, Hyper-Calvinists are reluctant to accept these two doctrines in a paradoxical balance not only because of their acceptance of 'logic' as such, but also because of their enthusiastic over-reaction against Arminianism. The consequence, obviously, is that Arminians over-react against them. And both have convinced themselves that they are doing so in the name of defending the honour of God. The Arminian feels that He must defend the love and holiness of God by stressing human responsibility, even if this places undue hindrance on divine sovereignty. And the Hyper-Calvinist feels that he must protect the sovereignty of God by an appeal to the Supralapsarian scheme, even if this means minimizing divine holiness and love on the one hand and human responsibility on the other.

Thus far our discussion has concerned itself mainly with divine sovereignty as it relates to the being and attributes and wills of God, with implications respecting human responsibility. The discussion, however, necessarily leads into the area of God's transient sovereignty as it relates to Creation and history through Providence. By examining the Hyper-Calvinist view of Providence one will further be able to discern whether, or to what extent, Hyper-Calvinism is deserving of the criticism that it so magnifies sovereignty that it minimizes responsibility.

F. PROVIDENCE

Concerning the Providence of God, Gill claims that "The sentiments of the Stoic philosophers come nearest to those of divine revelation".¹ This is an astonishing confession for Gill to make because, as we contend, only a non-Stoic view of Providence could justify Hyper-Calvinism from the charge of theoretically negating the responsibility of Man. Gill's deterministic divine transcendence is matched by an equally deterministic divine immanence, and it is difficult to escape the conclusion that he has little sympathy for the doctrine of human responsibility taught by the original Reformers.

According to Gill, what is ordained in the decrees is enacted by God's Providence.² All events are thus "ordered in Providence"³ and necessarily occur according to "the design of Providence" (a recurring phrase in Gill).⁴ The flow of Providence, however, is not always uniform. Gill describes in five paired groups the different ways in which Providence operates:

1. Mediate and immediate.⁵ Usually God operates through means, but He has the prerogative to act without means whenever He so chooses.
2. Ordinary and Extraordinary.⁶ Ordinary Providence is enacted by second causes in Nature; extraordinary Providence is supernatural and miraculous.
3. Universal and Singular.⁷ The former is general and concerns all Creation; the latter is particular and concerns individual creatures, especially rational creatures (angels and men).
4. Common and Special.⁸ God does some thing as a matter

1. Body, p.284. Cf. Body, p.278. Calvin, however, spoke against Stoic determinism. Cf. Institutes I, 16, 8. Then there is the problem of Stoic pantheism. On Providence, see Body, pp.277-304; Bentley, The Lord's Mark, The Saint's Protection at All Times; Hawker, Works, vol.VI, pp.716-717; Silver, Sovereignty of God, pp.94-152; Pink, Sovereignty, pp.35-58; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.227-244; IK, vol.I, pp.403-437.

2. Comm on Gen. 24:50, 28:12. Tucker argued that predestination is the cause of Providence; to deny the former is to deny the latter; to admit the latter is to admit the former (Predestination pp.165-167).

3. E.g., Comm on Gen.20:1, 21:14, 25:26, 27:2,5, 31:8, etc.

4. E.g., Comm on Gen. 19:8.

5. Body, pp.283, 284; Comm on Eccl. 3:11. So too Tucker, Predestination, pp.116ff.

6. Body, p.284.

7. Body, pp.284-285; S & T², vol.II, p.266.

...Cont'd:

course for all Creation, but does some things only for the elect.

5. Real and Moral.⁹ Real Providence concerns the being and essence of Creation; Moral Providence concerns the morality and ethics of rational creatures.

There is obviously considerable overlap between these headings, and there is particular similarity between headings 1 and 2, and 3 and 4. Any act of Providence falls into either category of all five headings. For example, God acts miraculously (1B, 2B) in the conversion (5B) of the elect (3B, 4B).

Gill later adds another heading which is of a different sort from these five. An act of Providence may deal with "conservation, or preservation of creatures, and the sustenation of them in their being" or with "government, or the wise and orderly disposal of all creatures, to answer the ends for which they are made and preserved".¹⁰ These two are not differentiated according to mode or object. It is according to this heading that God is "the preserver of all men, the Saviour of all men, as the God of Providence".¹¹

These headings are ways of describing how God acts in 'actual Providence'. We have already mentioned that Gill makes a distinction between 'virtual Providence' (internal-immanent, eternal, in purpose) and 'actual Providence' (external-transient, temporal, in execution).¹² This seems somewhat Platonic, at least by dividing the two spheres of existence. Overall, however, Gill believes that only 'actual Providence' is Providence in the usual and proper use of the term.

He also lists five kinds of instruments which God uses when He acts through means:

- a. Angels, good and bad.
- b. Kings, princes and civil magistrates, good and bad.
- c. Ministers of the Word, and masters of families.

8. Body, pp.71, 285; S & T², vol.II, p.175, 249, 271; S & T¹, vol.I, p.124; Comm on Pro. 16:4. Cf. Dell, Works, p.196.

9. Body, p.285.

10. Body, pp.288-291.

11. S & T¹, vol.I, p.19. Cf. Comm on I Tim. 4:10.

12. Body, p.278; S & T², vol.III, p.102.

- d. Irrational creatures. (Animals).
- e. Inanimate creatures.¹³

(That Gill omits men in general as such from this list does not mean that God does not use men's actions.)

'The way of Providence' is different from 'the way of Grace'.¹⁴ The former is subservient to the latter; the latter alone deals with salvation. (Gill can speak of a 'common grace' in general Providence, of which more will be said later.) This 'way of Providence', when contrasted with 'the way of grace', concerns God's usual and extraordinary means of operation.

God restrains some sins¹⁵ by "an overriding Providence... which oftentimes brings good out of evil".¹⁶ Sometimes "there is a just retaliation of (sinners) in Providence",¹⁷ but usually God patiently waits till the Consummation and the Judgement to punish sinners. That He has not punished sin in time does not mean that He approves of it.

Gill often speaks of 'the guidance of Providence'. Men "ought to live in a dependence on divine providence".¹⁸ This means that men should resign their wills to the secret will of God acting in Providence, as "God's secret will becomes revealed by events in providence".¹⁹ This is part of natural revelation but when the secret will becomes revealed in this sense it is not the same as the 'revealed will of God' in the Law and the Gospel. When God's plan in Nature is shown by the occurrence

13. Body, pp.286-288.

14. S & T¹, vol.I, p.19. Cf. Chapter XI below.

15. Comm on Gen. 47:13. On the relationship of common grace to the restraint of sin, see Chapter XI below.

16. Comm on Gen. 29:28. Cf. also Comm on Gen. 27:2, 39:19, 41:30.

17. Comm on Gen. 24:28. Cf. Comm on Gen. 44:16.

18. S & T², vol.II, p.550. Gill evidently believed in the practice of casting lots to determine God's guidance through this special providence. It was to be done only where Scripture offered no clear answer between two otherwise acceptable choices, and was to be done in faith, prayer and acquiescence (Cf. Comm on Pro.16:33; Acts I). The Puritans debated it. Wesley accepted it; Whitefield seems to have accepted it only temporarily. See the discussion in Ames, Marrow, pp.271-274. On the history of the practice among Baptists, cf. Goadby, Bye-Paths in Baptist History, pp.298-301. Pink discusses lots and the practice of opening the Bible at random in Godhead, pp.98-99.

19. Body, p.71. Cf. Comm on Acts 21:14, Body, p.952.

of certain actions, men should realize that God is in control. Outside of His special revelation, these events are neither salvific and prophetic. All human and non-human actions are controlled by God; even the very act of recognizing this determinism is controlled by God, as is also the resignation of the human will. All events, therefore, display that God is sovereign in the affairs of men.

The question of fatalism again arises. How can a man be responsible for his actions when all his actions are predetermined in the eternal decrees of God and are deterministically 'ordered' in the temporal Providence of God? Note that Gill denies that God is merely an observer or advisor in Providence. This would make God passive, but God is "all act ... having nothing passive in him".²⁰ Gill cannot conceive a God as transcendentally but not immanently deterministic. Note one of his maxims:

what is done by men, under the direction and influence of divine Providence, is said to be done by the Lord.²¹

This maxim refers to both God's mediate and immediate acts. That is, it regards both His miraculous actions affecting men as well as His normal working through means. In either case, God controls men so that what they do, God does. There is an identification of all actions. God's Providential actions "are executed with power irresistible".²² Hence, even common grace is irresistible. Furthermore, this refers to men's sinful as well as good actions, for

to exclude the providence of God from all concern in the sinful actions of men, is contrary to the independency of God ... creatures depend upon God, as in their being so in their operation, or they would be in action independent of him, and so there would be other independents besides him.²³

This analysis is specifically aimed at refuting Deism. The Deists would agree that God is transcendent; some might even agree that He

20. Body, p.172.

21. Comm on Ezek. 29:14.

22. Body, p.304.

23. Body, p.302. On the ramifications for reprobation and the problem of evil, see Chapter IV below.

has already determined all the actions of Nature. They denied, however, that God now interferes or controls the actions of Nature (Creation) by Providence, whether mediately or immediately. For them God is but an observer or advisor. Human virtue is measured by how Man acts independently of God's direct influence. Their famous alarm-clock analogy represents God as being the first cause in some sense (not in a uniquely necessary sense), but the second causes are independent of divine control. This is the doctrine of 'the moral nature and fitness of things' which Gill sought to refute. He considered it to be rank Epicureanism. Speaking of the Deists, Gill charged that

such in all ages who have denied a providence, have been looked upon as atheists ... wherefore they are the libertines of the age, who in any period, as the followers of Epicurus, deny the providence of God; and this they do, that they may have the reins loose on their own necks, and be under no restraint, but at liberty to indulge to the gratification of every sensual lust.²⁴

For Gill, then, the assertion that men are independent of the full control of God's Providence is Antinomianism. He thus denies that independence is essential to responsibility. As the Stoics said, virtue is determined by Man's resignation to the inevitable and the control of Providence, not by Man's independent action.

In answer to the old question about human responsibility, "Can God create a rock too heavy for Him to lift?", Gill would answer that God cannot.²⁵ This inability is a perfection of God. He would further deny that God can or has created any rock which can lift itself. That theory would be Arminian. Some Arminians and many Low Calvinists contend that God is so great in power that He can create a rock having in itself such a relative degree of sufficient power as to accept God's non-deterministic offer of assistance. This theory does not contend that the rock can then lift itself. God does all the lifting, but the rock has the ability inherent in its own created nature to decide to ask for (or at

24. Body, pp.280-281. Cf. Comm on Acts 17:18; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.231, 234. In a possible reference to the popular Deist analogy of God winding up a clock and not interfering with it, Irons said that compared with God men are hardly even machines - a clock needs occasional winding up but men need constant keeping up (Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.III, p.51).

25. Tucker uses this illustration to defend absolute sovereignty. See Predestination, pp.199-205.

least receive the offer of) God to lift it. This would be the doctrine of sufficient common grace which needs special grace for salvation. But Gill rejected this sort of reasoning.

26. Further comments on the responsibility for sin are reserved for Chapter IV.

G. MIRACLES

Gill believed that God does not always enact the decrees through means. God occasionally, though rarely, works "immediately, without the use of means".¹ Sometime He works "over and above means, and what means cannot reach unto" and sometimes "contrary to the nature of things, of means, and second causes",² though the difference between these two modes of immediate operation is not clear. As the author of Nature, God can change the course of Nature as He pleases³ and He does so to show that He is not bound by either Nature or means.⁴ A miracle is "a preternatural action"⁵ and occurs "not in appearance only, but in reality".⁶ A miracle, then, is actual and not virtual. God only rarely works by miracles and even more rarely does He perform a double miracle, "a miracle within a miracle".⁷

Gill stressed the doctrine of miracles in order to oppose Deism. Some Deists may have accepted that God acts through second causes, but they would have described it differently from Gill and they emphatically rejected all miracles. According to Deism, it would be criminal of God to act above or against the laws of Nature which He Himself instituted. Miracles, therefore, cannot and have not ever occurred. The Deists explicitly rejected even the Virgin Birth and Resurrection of Christ. Sometimes they merely scoffed at miracles, considering them to be superstitions and myths. At other times they tried radically to re-interpret the Biblical miracles, or at least the Biblical account of them, so as to retain what they considered the spiritual meaning which the miracles illustrated. To them, that God can and has intervened in Nature or history is not a meaning inherent in the Biblical miracles. Such intervention is impossible, inconsistent and irrelevant.

Gill held that a miracle is "what could never be done by any mere

1. Comm on Ex. 4:7; cf. on Eccl. 3:11. On miracles, see Hoeksema, Reformed Dogmatics, pp.236-244; J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.II, pp.5-38; vol.III, pp.128-134; Pink, Revelation, p.81.

2. Body, p.283; cf. p.17.

3. Comm on Ex. 4:3, Joshua 3:11.

4. Body, p.283.

5. Comm on Mark 2:12.

6. Comm on Ex. 4:3.

7. Comm on Ex. 9:24.

man",⁸ but also that God sometimes used certain men to perform miracles. The Apostles were given the gift of working miracles. However, Gill also contended that God no longer works through miracles, as in Biblical days, much less gives the gift of working miracles to men. The only miracles which God can be said to perform are those of conversions. That God uses the ministry of the Word for this does not mean that ministers themselves work miracles in the way that the Apostles worked miracles. The cessation of the charismatic gifts was hardly a question debated among Protestant divines; nearly all rejected their continuance (especially the Romanist pseudo-miracles associated with Francis of Assisi et al). Gill accepted the argument that miracles are necessarily revelatory and that, since revelation ceased with the completion of the New Testament, miracles have completely ceased.⁹

Now Deists denied that conversion was a miraculous act of God. Hence, they also denied the distinction of special and common grace. Indeed, according to most Federal Calvinists, they denied Biblical grace in toto by their free-will self-salvation. The Deists agreed with both Stoics and Epicureans in rejecting special divine intervention in Nature, though their indeterminist Providence agreed more with the latter than with the former. For Gill and all other Federal Calvinists, the doctrine of divine miraculous intervention is of the absolute essence of Biblical Christianity.

8. Comm on Mark 2:12.

9. This does not necessarily mean that acceptance of the miraculous gifts for today is intrinsically incompatible with basic Reformed doctrine. Most Calvinists have denied that the gifts continue (e.g., Warfield, Counterfeit Miracles; Chantry, Signs of the Apostles), but this does not of itself mean that the acceptance position is non-Reformed. Indeed, several Calvinists - usually Low ones (e.g., R.T. Kendall) - have taken the latter view. Thomas Smail, Reflected Glory, is an example of this from the Neo-orthodox Calvinist perspective. A few Gospel Standard Baptists take the position because of its tendency to subjectivism. Even some High Calvinists follow this line (e.g. Lloyd-Jones).

H. ETERNITY

A brief discussion of the Hyper-Calvinist concept of eternity is in order here. According to Dr. Gill, "every thing is done ... at the time it should".¹ Whatever occurs in time has already been determined by God in eternity. The secret will of God is eternal and not temporal; "no new will, or act of will, can arise in God, or any decree by made by him, which was not from eternity".² Hence, his teleology follows the two-tiered time scheme in the maxim: "Nothing temporal can be the cause or condition of what is eternal".³

Is eternity chronological? Gill says that it is "without beginning and end"⁴ and he can speak of "an eternity past".⁵ The transcendent time sphere of eternity is even said to be "from one eternity to another".⁶ God is eternal and has no beginning. Men and angels possess only 'aeviternity', having a beginning but no end.⁷ Properly speaking, however, eternity is non-chronological:

Eternity, properly so called, is that which is without beginning and end, is without succession, or does not proceed in a succession of moments one after another; and is opposed to time, which has a beginning, goes in a

1. S & T¹, vol.I, p.19. On eternity, see especially Body, pp.45-50; J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.II, pp.333-341; Wells, Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, 1865, pp.445-452; Hoeksema, TK, vol.I, pp.387-392; vol.II, pp.302-315; Hussey, Glory, pp.69, 86-88, 92; Brine, Vindications, pp.4-8. We mention only in passing Hussey's differentiation between 'eternal' and 'everlasting'. On this see Brine, Proper Eternity of the Divine Decrees; John Warburton, Jr., Memorials, pp.271-293; Toon, HC, p.101.

2. Comm on Eph. 1:4. Cf. Cause, p.75; Comm on Isa. 47:7, Rom. 9:15; Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.184; Pink, Sovereignty, p.103. Crisp is alleged to have said that "all is done from eternity, and so nothing is to be done now" (cf. Edwards, Crispianism Unmasked, pp.50-51); but clearly this refers to the making of decrees and not their execution.

3. S & T¹, vol.III, p.109; Body, p.188, etc. Almost the exact words are in Twisse, Riches, Part I, p.163. Many of the Puritans spoke in this manner.

4. Body, p.45.

5. Comm on Job 36:26.

6. S & T¹, vol.II, p.302; Comm on Job 36:7, Psa. 103:17, Isa. 57:15, Eph. 3:18, etc. Hazelton: "Eternity is coming, and in this little bit of eternity (for we are in eternity now; time is part of eternity) should it be according to our mind when we are loved with a love that streams from a past eternity, with a love that reaches to an eternity yet to come" (Sermons, p.69).

7. Body, p.45.

succession, and has an end.⁸

When, therefore, Scripture speaks of chronology in God or in eternity it speaks anthropomorphically, "in accommodation and condescension to our weak minds, which are not capable of conceiving of duration but as successive".⁹ Properly speaking, time does not belong to God,¹⁰ for "he co-exists, with all points of time, in time".¹¹ God "inhabits one undivided, uninterrupted, eternity, to which time is but a mere point or moment".¹² The difference between time and eternity, one could say, is both quantitative and qualitative. Eternity is quantitatively larger in that it is infinite time. Eternity is to time what infinity, or at least omnipresence, is to space, "for as he is not bounded by space, so neither by time".¹³ On the other hand, God has not fully revealed just what eternity is, and what He has said is by way of contrast with time, both as to duration and to nature. God alone is eternal and immortal¹⁴ and is eternity itself.¹⁵

8. Body, pp.45-46. Cf. Body, p.48; Philpot, Eternal Sonship, pp.22, 85; Tucker, Predestination, p.33; Brine, Vindication, p.4; Hawker, Works, vol.VI, pp.234-235; Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, p.588, and Good Pleasure, p.347.

9. Body, p.49.

10. Body, p.36.

11. Body, p.49.

12. Comm on Isa. 57:15. Philpot: "Time, with all its incidents, is but a moment; space with all its dimensions, is but a speck, compared with the existence of a God who inhabiteth eternity, and therefore filleth all time and all space" (Meditations, vol.I, p.6). Hazelton, "God works as a whole - past, present and future are one glorious chain" (Sermons, p.72).

13. Body, p.45. Hoeksema says that both time and space are created by God (IK, vol.I, p.387; vol.III, p.150). Only in an anthropomorphic way can eternity be called time, for "Eternity is not time, not even time ad infinitum. There is a qualitative difference between eternity and time. Time is not a part of eternity: it is outside of eternity, essentially distinct from it, as creation is distinct from God" (IK, vol.I, p.390).

14. Body, p.46; Comm on I Tim. 1:17. We know of no Hyper-Calvinist who has denied the eternality of the punishment of the reprobate in Hell. Other forms of Calvinism, though, have re-opened the discussion. Karl Barth has some distinctive ideas on the subject from the Neo-Orthodox point of view, while Sarrells's views of salvation outside of the Gospel (see Chapter VIII) raise questions relative to eternal Hell and those who have never heard the Gospel. From the High position, Cushman has openly considered whether the eternity of Hell should be considered infinite in degree (vertically conceived) rather than in duration (horizontally conceived). See his remarks in The Sovereignty of Grace. His thoughts share some points in common with Hussey's views of 'eternal' and 'everlasting', though Hussey took the orthodox view of Hell.

15. Body, pp.45, 49; Comm on I Sam. 15:29. Because Christ is "God of God", wrote Hoeksema, He is also "Eternity of Eternity" (IK, vol.I, p.588). Cf. the doctrine of eternal generation in Chapter V.

The relationship between the two is similar to other dichotomies in Gill's theology. The secret will of God is eternal; it has, improperly speaking, been communicated in the revealed will, even as eternity can interrupt time (miracles, etc.) while still encompassing it. Divine sovereignty is eternal and envelops human responsibility which is temporal.

I. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Divine sovereignty is manifested in salvation through the Kingdom of God, and Gill's doctrine on this subject contains several unusual points worth noting.¹

The Kingdom of God takes two forms. Christ inaugurated the present Kingdom of Grace as "the governing principle of grace in the soul".² This is the spiritual reign of Christ in His Church.³ Thus far this sounds like classic Amillennialism except that Gill also believes that this Kingdom will eventually spread throughout the whole world through the successful propagation of the Gospel, finally conquering the Roman Antichrist and resulting in the conversion of the Jews.⁴ Gill thought that all this would probably happen before 1866.⁵ With the exception of the date-setting, Gill's Post-Millennialism thus far follows the Puritan tradition (though some Puritans preferred Amillennialism).⁶

1. See especially Body, pp.448-453, 643-667 and Comm on Rev. 20 and Matt. 13, etc.; W.R. Ward, 'Baptists and the Transformation of the Church', pp.169-171.

2. Comm on Rom. 14:17; Heb. 12:28; Num. 23:21. So too Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.126; Philpot, Sermons, vol.VII, p.78; Warburton, Gospel, p.85. See Chapter XI.

3. Body, pp.448-453; S & T, vol.I, pp.54-56.

4. Body, pp.448-453. Cf. Love, The Strange and Wonderful Predictions of Mr. Christopher Love ... Also Extracts from the Writings of Dr. Gill and Robert Fleming, pp.32-40.

5. Comm on Rev. 13:6. See Christopher Love, loc. cit., and Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, pp.231-247, 364-366. Huntington later picked up the theory and invoked no little controversy. See his The Time of the Fall of the Papacy, The Previous Declension, and the Means of Its Overthrow, Calculated From the Dates of the Prophets: With a Scriptural Discovery of the True Millenium, And the Year of Its Commencement; and also Substance, pp.69-70, and A Key to the Hieroglyphical Print of the Church of God, in Works, vol.XVII, pp.81-84, 262. Cf. 'Y.Z.', A Letter to Mr. C. Goulding; Wright, The Life of William Huntington, S.S., pp.72-75; Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, p.364. Philpot himself did a little date-setting (Reviews, vol.I, pp.304-371). The theory suggests that since the Papal Antichrist is to reign for 1260 years and that this began in A.D. 606, the fall would occur around 1866. They were not the only ones teaching this theory, which gained some credence as the First Vatican Council was meeting (1869-1870). Johann Bengel, the German commentator, aroused controversy at the same time as Gill by his theory that the Antichrist's reign would end in 1836. Some of the Puritans expected something to occur in 1666 (Millenium plus Antichrist). Pink never indulged in the date-setting of other Dispensationalists, though he accepted the emphasis that the return of Christ could occur at any moment and this would probably be very soon. Later Pink renounced the Pre-millennial position and mocked all attempts at date-setting as the fanciful results of the over-imaginative minds of those who consider such theological trivia to be of the greatest significance. Similar invectives are levied at times by opponents of the Hyperist system itself for its fascination with the intricacies of the divine, eternal and secret counsel. One is tempted to compare Hypers with the eleven in Acts 1 - more concerned with prying into the secret will than with evangelism.

6. See Iain Murray, The Puritan Hope. The Antinomians were mostly Post-Millenarians, as were many of the extreme sects which, like the Antinomians, associated themselves with Cromwell. Dell was Post-Millennial (Works, pp.74, 583), as was Whitby, Gill's opponent in Cause.

Gill, however, attempted to harmonize this with the Anabaptist Pre-millennial tradition. Thus, after the spiritual reign of Christ in the Church will follow the personal return and "personal reign of Christ".⁷ This aspect of the Kingdom is described in classic Premillennial terms, though at times he seems to equate the future Millenium with the eternal state.⁸ At the return of Christ, the Kingdom of Grace becomes the Kingdom of Glory.⁹ This transition follows his teaching of the relationship between grace and glory: the two are inseparable, grace produces glory, grace is temporal but glory is eternal, and so on (see Chapter XI below).

Three pertinent observations deserve to be made. First, this unusual Chiliast dichotomy combines both Pre- and Post-Millennialism, but the former predominates. Gill evidently sought to go beyond the Puritan Post-Millennialism without entirely rejecting it. This closely parallels his merging Puritan Sublapsarianism with Supralapsarianism, with the latter predominating. (See Chapter IV below). In this combination of pairs of Millennial and decretal positions, Gill was almost unique in being a Pre-millennial Supralapsarian, especially in view of his also accepting so much of Post-Millennialism and Sublapsarianism. There were, to be sure, a number of Pre-Millennialists among the Independent Non-conformists who supported Cromwell; these were doctrinally and politically situated, as it were, between the Anglicans and Presbyterians on the one hand, and the Anabaptists and splinter groups (Ranters, Familists, Levellers, etc.) on the other.¹⁰ The Anglican and Presbyterian Calvinists tended to be Post-Millennial; the Independents, Amillennial; the others, an assortment of positions. There were, of course, exceptions such as the Post-Millennial Anabaptists, some Amillennial Anglicans, Post-Millennial Independents and so on. This reveals much about the trends and mixtures among the various groups, and shows how complex were the relationships between the various views of politics, ecclesiology, and eschatology.

7. Cf. especially Body, pp.643-667 and Comm on Rev. 20. See also Hussey, Glory, pp.28, 662-668, 871-872, 917-918. Styles: "The Millenarian's favourite expression, 'the future personal reign of Jesus Christ', involves an absurdity. A monarch is a person. Reigning is a personal act. If the phrase 'a personal reign' were permissible, there would be such a thing as 'an impersonal reign'" (Guide, p.112).

8. S & T, vol.I, pp.54-56.

9. Cf. Comm on Heb. 12:28, Num. 23:21. Philpot: "The kingdom of grace here, the kingdom of glory hereafter" (Sermons, vol.VII, p.81).

...Cont'd:

Secondly, the dichotomy seems to follow the actual-virtual scheme. Christ rules spiritually in the present Kingdom of Grace (the virtual reign) and will one day rule personally in the Kingdom of Glory (the actual reign).

Thirdly, one enters the Kingdom of Glory via the Kingdom of Grace, and the entrance to both is by acquiescing to the will of God. The Kingdom of Glory is inevitable and is immediately rooted in the secret will of God. The Kingdom of Grace, however, is based on the revealed will (though indirectly on the secret will also). Nevertheless, the Kingdom of Glory takes precedence over the Kingdom of Grace in the same way that the secret will envelops the revealed will. The latter reign is specifically salvific and involves individual faith, but as it is superintended by the former, entrance to it is through resignation to the inevitability of the Consummation of the reign of God.

These positions, however, were held by Gill but not by all subsequent Hyper-Calvinists. Philpot was not Premillennial, nor was Hoeksema, nor were many others. Pink was in his early days but later repudiated it.

This does not mean that all other Hyper-Calvinists have shared Gill's millennial views. As a matter of fact, few have. Most have been Amillennial. Hoeksema was an emphatic Amillennialist and wrote much on the subject.¹¹ Wells rejected the idea of a future, literal Millennium. Such a state would be comparable to Purgatory – both are intermediate states.¹² Pink was originally a Premillennial Dispensationalist and wrote several books defending the position, the more important of them being

10. See Gertrude Huehns, Antinomianism in English History.

11. See the following works: The Millennial Period; Behold He Cometh (a commentary on the book of Revelation); Dogmatics, pp.816ff; God's Eternal Good Pleasure (an exposition of Romans 9:11); IK, vol.II, pp.103-123, 287-301; vol.III, pp.516-537. Hoeksema likens Post-Millennialism and 'free offer' theology to the doctrine of Evolution, which he and all Hypers have rejected (IK, vol.I, pp.422-427; vol.II, p.115).

12. Wells, Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, 1869, pp.49-56. See also Palmer, Plain Papers on the Millennium.

The Redeemer's Return and The Antichrist. Midway through his ministry he renounced the system and came to adhere to the Amillennial position.

Some may wonder whether this question is relevant to a discussion of Hyper-Calvinism. We feel that there is one point which is particularly relevant and it is this. How does one's Millennial views affect his evangelism? If one believes that history will show human society growing progressively more sinful, obviously he will be rather pessimistic about history. Some charge this position with retreating from society. Hence, if one held to classic Pre-Millennialism, which is basically pessimistic, he could argue that evangelism would be futile in the face of such opposition. Indeed, some Hyper-Calvinists seem to have taken this line, at least in practice. Amillennialists differ on this point; some are pessimistic, some are optimistic. Post-Millennialists, on the other hand, are very optimistic about the spread of the Gospel in history. They expect a great worldwide revival before Christ returns to earth. And yet some Hyper-Calvinists have awaited such a revival and this has not stirred them to evangelism. One feels that they argue that since revival is coming anyway, their efforts to bring it will neither help nor hinder its coming - so why bother?

It would be difficult for anyone to specify which of these positions is 'the Reformed position'. There is a problem in determining which position was held by Calvin, though our opinion at present is that he was basically Amillennial. And yet he wrote no Commentary on Revelation. The Puritans differed on the question, though few were Pre-Millennial. The current school of Theonomism is emphatically Post-Millennial. Some High Calvinists have suggested that when one changes from Arminianism to Calvinism he is usually first Pre-, then A-, then Post- in due proportion to his becoming more grounded in his Calvinism, which is getting progressively higher. We grant that this is sometimes the case but certainly not always, much less that it should be. We do admit, however, that the Amillennial position stands between the other two in many respects. And yet the other two both speak much about the place of the Jews in the fulfillment of future Biblical prophecies, while the Amillennialist sees the Church as the anti-type of Israel. The Amillennial and Post-Millennial views do not see a literal thousand year reign of Christ in the future, and hence are in agreement. Moreover, it would be incorrect to picture all Amillennialists as pessimists. Some think that the world will neither improve nor degenerate in proportion to the spread

of Christianity. There will always be a balance. When they become optimistic they usually become Post-Millennial, for what else is a Post-Millennialist than an optimistic Amillennialist?

Furthermore, not all Pre-Millennialists are Dispensational (nor pessimistic. Gill was neither.) Similarly, there are many variations of views within each of the positions mentioned above. None can be called either 'the Reformed view' or 'the Hyper-Calvinist position'. We cannot find any single strain common to all Hyper-Calvinists relevant to the question, but we feel that Gill's theory reflected his own Hyper-Calvinism.

CHAPTER IV

SUPRALAPSARIANISM

A. THE ORDER OF THE DECREES

It hardly needs to be mentioned to any student of Reformed theology that Hyper-Calvinism has often been described or defined in terms of Supralapsarianism.¹ There is, of course, much truth in this. We have not found a single Hyper-Calvinist who was not Supralapsarian. Many have professed this view,² but that does not of itself mean that all the others did as well. But with all the differences between those who can be described as Hyper-Calvinists, this element holds a prominent place in their theology and is a very important tenet which they share. That some Hypers at times sound Sublapsarian instead does not negate this,

1. A.H. Strong, "Supralapsarianism is therefore hyper-Calvinistic, rather than Calvinistic" (Systematic Theology, p.777). Wilks: "modern Antinomianism [Hyper-Calvinism] is neither more nor less than superlapsarianism, and that superlapsarianism is modern Antinomianism" (p.20. Note the variant spelling. On the equation of Hyper-Calvinism with Doctrinal Antinomianism, see Chapter X below). Wilks also held that Modern Calvinists, which include both High and Low Calvinists, are Sublapsarian while Modern Antinomians are Supralapsarian (pp.16-17). Pugh said the same thing: "We have in Calvinism what are called High Calvinists and Moderate Calvinists, - sublapsarian and supralapsarian" (p.106). It is because of the use of terms such as these that this present work is written, for there is as much difference of opinion and ignorance about the varieties and classifications of Calvinism as there is about the various decretal positions. Others who have described Hyper-Calvinism in terms of Supralapsarianism, or vice versa, include the following: Thiessen, Systematic Theology, p.343; L.S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol.III, pp.179, 184; Armitage, p.561; New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, vol.I, p.198; Good, Are Baptists Calvinists?, pp.73, 81, 108, 131, 230.

2. E.g., Stevens, Help, vol.I, p.164; Verses, p.13; Silver, Sovereignty, pp.24, 53; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, p.23; Bentley, The Lord the Helper of His People, p.12; Hussey, Glory, pp.111-112, 169-170, 209 (cf. Toon, HC, pp.75f.); etc. Pink: "I am a strong supra-lapsarian, and in my judgement, any one who is not firmly fixed there is bound to go astray in his subsequent thinking and postulates" (Letters, p.74). Pink's views will be mentioned below. It is significant that Pink acknowledged a debt to Gill on this question and admitted that few would follow their position (Election and Justification, pp.66ff.). The major works on Supralapsarian by Hypers include the following: Gill, Truth Defended, in S & T¹, vol.II; Brine, Remarks Upon a Pamphlet Entitled, Some Doctrines in the Supralapsarian Scheme Impartially Examined by the Word of God; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.161-165, 333-335; TK, vol.II, pp.204-208; Homer Hoeksema, Voice (often). Gill was said to be the best and most prolific defender of the theory in the eighteenth century (so Brine, Remarks; Seymour, pp.90-95; Rippon, p.xxix). His treatment in Body, pp.172-255, has been quoted by numerous Supras ever since, though not by the Hoeksemas.

for even the most emphatic Supralapsarians occasionally appear to contradict themselves or at least modify their view.³

On the other hand, we cannot agree with those who assert that all Supralapsarians are Hyper-Calvinists. For example, Theodore Beza was Supralapsarian, but few scholars would specify him as a Hyper.⁴ To be precise, in keeping with the terminology most commonly accepted and employed in the present volume,⁵ Beza would better be described as a High Calvinist. Of course, there is considerable difference among High Calvinists on the order of the decrees: some were 'Supra', others were 'Sub' or 'Infra'.⁶ The record shows that while all Hyper-Calvinists are Supralapsarian, not all Supralapsarians are Hyper-Calvinists.⁷

It is difficult to say just who was the first to teach Supralapsarianism. Some see it in Augustine, Gottschalk, Abelard or even Duns Scotus. Often this assertion is made in the context of the claim that each of these taught limited atonement.⁸ Others seem to feel that Beza was the first to teach it, but we are reluctant to accept this without documentation. Nobody, to our knowledge, has suggested that this was

3. E.g., Gill, Body, pp.213, 230; Song, p.306; Comm on Luke 10:33; Cause, p.25; Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.64; Perkins, Works, vol.I, p.77; Silver, Sovereignty, p.41; Pink, Election and Juustification, p.59.

4. Even the able A.H. Strong makes this mistake: "Beza carried Calvin's doctrine of predestination to an extreme supralapsarianism, which is hyper-Calvinistic rather than Calvinistic" (Systematic Theology, p.46. Cf. p.777).

5. Our concluding Chapter will elaborate the terms used in this work, with a catalogue of representatives from each group.

6. These abbreviations are sometimes employed in discussions of the subject (e.g., Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.164-165, 250). Sometimes 'Supralapsarian' is initially capitalized, sometimes not; rarely is it hyphenated (e.g., Pink's Letters, p.74). Rarely is it spelled 'Superlapsarian' (e.g., Wilks, p.20; Goodwin, Works, vol.IX, p.344). Homer Hoeksema spoke of 'supersupralapsarians', who teach 'a modified supralapsarianism' in which election and reprobation are not viewed on the same level (Voice, p.238, 249).

7. William Young says, "Even the doctrine of justification from eternity is in itself no more antinomianism than supralapsarianism is hyper-Calvinistic" (Encyclopaedia of Christianity, vol.I, p.272). The distinctive of Hyper-Calvinism is the rejection of the 'Free Offer' practice. Some Supras reject it and are Hyper; other Supras accept it and are High; all Subs accept it. Engelsma feels that "Contrary to the thinking of some, the doctrine of supralapsarianism does not make one a Hyper-Calvinist" (p.10). But he errs in thinking that he is not a Hyper-Calvinist, though a confessed non-offer Supra.

8. In Chapter IX, Section A, we discuss the views of each of these concerning the extent of the atonement, but an examination of their views on the order of the decrees would be beyond the scope of our investigations. A good history of Supralapsarianism is a desideratum in Reformed historical theology.

Luther's position, though occasionally we read that it was held by Zwingli⁹ and Calvin.¹⁰ If, as we believe and seek to prove later in this work, Calvin did not teach limited atonement, it is highly unlikely that he would have taught Supralapsarianism. We know of no theologian, Reformed or otherwise, who has made that unlikely combination in the historic sense. It is possible only when non-Reformed elements are introduced (cf. Barth and Berkouwer's views).

Nobody, on the other hand, questions that Supralapsarianism was advocated by Beza, Perkins, Gomarus and Ames. There is some evidence that it may have been the view of Zanchius. Later prominent Supras include Maccovius, Piscator, Voetius, Rutherford, Goodwin, Chauncy, Toplady and Trigland. William Twisse, Moderator of the Westminster Assembly, was a prominent Supra and wrote what is still the definitive work on the subject, the massive but poorly organized The Riches of God's Love Unto the Vessel of Mercy. Thomas Goodwin was another prominent Puritan Supra and his views included a few unusual aspects.¹¹ More recently, Abraham Kuyper taught the theory. He was opposed mainly by Herman Bavinck, who offered some alterations which curiously parallel some of Goodwin's perspectives.

Supralapsarianism has always been the minority view amongst Reformed theologians. Nobody disputes this. And hardly anybody holds it today. It is the product of past theological battles which are rarely fought today. Some similar questions today, however, have to do with Calvinistic tradition. Thus, some Supras have claimed eminent Calvinists of the past for their cause, sometimes with no evidence whatsoever. Wilks, for example curiously claims Bishop Davenant was a Supralapsarian,¹² but such could hardly be the case. Others seem to feel that

9. Locher curiously says that Zwingli was both Supra and Sub (Zwingli's Thought, pp.134-135). Even more curious is his claim that Zwingli taught universal atonement. As we shall see in Chapter IX, Zwingli did in fact teach universal atonement, but that position is incompatible with both Supralapsarianism and Sublapsarianism as popularly understood.

10. Some have suggested that Calvin's alleged change from limited to universal atonement was concurrent with his supposed change from Supralapsarianism to Sublapsarianism or Infralapsarianism. See Strong, Systematic Theology, pp.777-778. The subject has been discussed here and there but we should like to see a more substantial treatment of the problem. Gill feels that Calvin was Sublapsarian, Beza was Supralapsarian, and most Reformed divines were Sublapsarian (Body, p.185).

11. Cf. Works, vol. IX, especially pp.84-149, 344. This is vital to a proper understanding of Goodwin's unusual Pre-Existerian Christology, for which see Chapter V below.

12. Wilks, p.16.

Jonathan Edwards held to the theory because of his teleology and determinism. For sure, there are a few places in his writings which could conceivably be interpreted in this way if it were not for his explicit denials elsewhere.¹³ Andrew Fuller was once a Supra but changed when he abandoned Hyper-Calvinism in favour of Moderate Calvinism.¹⁴

This high doctrine can be found in none of the historic Reformed confessions or catechisms. Indeed, several of them definitely exclude it. The Westminster symbols are usually interpreted as being Sublapsarian, but we prefer to follow the opinion which says that they only tend in that direction. Indeed, several of the most prominent divines at Westminster were Supralapsarian (Twisse, Goodwin and Rutherford, for example).

A problem relevant to Hyper-Calvinist Supralapsarianism arises in conjunction with the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort. As mentioned in Chapter II, the school of Herman Hoeksema is staunchly Supra. It also subscribes with a fervent, almost traditionalist, adherence to the Heidelberg Catechism - which is definitely not Supralapsarian. The same is true with the Canons of Dort, and we know of none who suggest otherwise. Herman and Homer Hoeksema get around the difficulty in a way which has caused some critics to charge them with inconsistency at best and dishonesty at worst. The Hoeksemas admit that the Canons of Dort are "plainly Infralapsarian", but they add that the Canons do not condemn Supralapsarianism.¹⁵ Therefore, Dort's Infralapsarianism (what other Calvinists call Sublapsarianism) is not binding on churches which subscribe to the Canons.¹⁶ After all, both theories are against Arminianism.¹⁷ What is particularly disturbing to critics of the Hoeksema school is that the Hoeksemas have been so aggressive in

13. "God's decree of the eternal damnation of the reprobate is not to be conceived of as prior to the fall ... The decrees of God must be conceived of in the same order, and as antecedent to, and consequent on, one another, in the same manner, as God's acts in the execution of those decrees ... Therefore the decree of the permission of sin is prior to all other things in the decree of reprobation" (Works, 1834 edition, vol.II, pp.541-542).

14. John Ryland, Jr., The Work of Faith, pp.350-351.

15. Hoeksema, Dogmatics, p.333; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.23, 121-122, 136, 143, 151-153, 163-167, 190, 235, 239, 249.

16. Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.165.

17. Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.152, 165, 235, 249-250.

their use of the Canons to oppose 'semi-Arminian' Calvinism (i.e. Calvinism teaching a free offer). Another defence of the Hoeksema school is that Supralapsarians can accept the Canons because Gomarus himself was Supralapsarian.¹⁸ Other critics feel that the Hoeksemas are setting up a 'canon within the Canons', allowing them to pick and choose which ones they will accept and force on others (even to the point of denominational discipline - witness the controversy of 1924), and which ones they will reject - all in the name of protecting Reformed doctrinal purity.

What, then, is Supralapsarianism? Unfortunately there has been considerable confusion surrounding the term and the theory it represents. Much of the misunderstanding can be attributed to the extremely difficult subject in question, for it is never easy to formulate explicit doctrines about the eternal and immanent acts of God, especially when Scripture itself gives only implicit information (at best) on the specific point which is debated. Others who are confused about the subject come from a theological background which is alien to the discussion as chalk is from cheese. And still others are just ignorant of the primary sources and have chosen rather to pass on hearsay.

In brief, the term comes from the two Latin words supra (above or before) and lapsus (fall). Hence, it is an attempt to describe the decrees of election and reprobation as occurring before the decree to permit sin. To a large extent the discussion concerns the problem of reprobation more than election. Thus we investigate it in the same chapter as reprobation. Election will be discussed in the following chapter. This does not mean, though, that this is the order in which the Hyper-Calvinists themselves have chosen in which to discuss it. We only say that this is the order we ourselves follow in our study.

As we said, much of the confusion concerns the terminology involved, more specifically the terms 'Sublapsarian' and 'Infralapsarian'. Technically, 'sub' and 'infra' are basically synonymous for 'below' and 'after'. Gill prefers to use 'Sublapsarian'; the Hoeksemas choose 'Infralapsarian'; others fall into either camp, and some use both. Difficulty

18. This would parallel the manner in which other Supralapsarians appeal to Twisse's being Moderator at Westminster. It should be pointed out that Dort was far more controversial than Westminster - it issued a condemnation of its opponents as such - and the Westminster symbols were meant to be an encyclopaedic summary of doctrine.

with Supralapsarianism aside, confusion with these two terms has arisen in some quarters due to some writers differentiating them.¹⁹ That is, certain theologians have described the order of Sublapsarianism as follows: creation, fall, election/reprobation, atonement. They have then described Infralapsarianism as follows: creation, fall, atonement, election/reprobation. Hence, the Sub view follows the Supra view in placing election/reprobation before atonement. The result is limited atonement. The Infra position, it is felt, teaches universal atonement. Actually there is much validity in this classification, for the last position virtually matches what is generally called Amyraldianism or Low Calvinism. Unfortunately, since there is so much confusion and so few scholars describe Amyraldianism as Infralapsarianism in contradistinction to Sublapsarianism, it is best to follow the standard threefold classification: Supralapsarianism, Sublapsarianism/Infralapsarianism, Amyraldianism/Low Calvinism. Note also that the last two are in agreement with each other against the first in that they place the election/reprobation decree after the decree to permit the fall. They feel that election and reprobation are out of 'the fallen mass' rather than 'the pure mass'.

It hardly needs to be said that all of these decrees are eternal and not temporal. Some persons have misunderstood this. They somehow think that when one says that election was before the fall, that election is eternal and the fall is temporal; and that when election is said by the Subs to be after the fall, this means that both the fall and election are temporal. Nothing of ^{the} sort is the case. This kind of misunderstanding generally occurs with those who are more in agreement with an Arminian perspective than those with any sort of a Calvinist viewpoint. (This should not be confused, however, with the alternative Low view which has both a 'before' and 'after' aspect of the eternal decrees in relation to temporal activity. See below.)

Another problem concerns the place of the Creation decree in the Supralapsarian scheme.²⁰ Some place this as the first of the decrees, for

19. See, for instance, Good, Are Baptists Calvinists?, p.230; L.S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol.III, pp.179, 184; Buswell, Systematic Theology, vol.II, pp.133-136; Baker, A Dispensational Theology, pp.159-160, 383; Thiessen, Systematic Theology, p.343. It is possible that some of this problem has arisen due to the treatment in A.H. Strong's Systematic Theology, for Strong's influence is regularly seen in each of these writers (to a lesser extent in Buswell, who takes Strong to task for his Ethical Monism). Compare their overlap in our excursus on Calvin and limited atonement below. Further discussion will also be found in Chapter IX.

20. Cf. Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, pp.204-208.

it is logically necessary that when God begins to decree men as elect or reprobate it is necessary to presuppose them as created or uncreated. If created, the creation decree is first; if uncreated, then their existence is only hypothetical. Some, therefore, say that it must be first or else the system does not make sense. But others place it last in the order for a very important reason.

That reason is this: the order of the decrees is the exact opposite of the order of their enactment in history. God first ordains the end and then the means to that end. Gill:

if this is not the case, God must create men without an end, which is contrary to the principle of reason and wisdom ... it is a known rule that what is first in intention, is last in execution, and vice-versa: the end is first fixed, and then the means.²¹

Hence, as Homer Hoeksema explains,

the order of history is, so to speak, infralapsarian, but the order of the decrees is supralapsarian, so that history unfolds in exactly the opposite order from that of the decrees (what is last in history, namely, the glory of God in Christ and in the elect church, is first in God's counsel)...²²

This is as much as to say that the end justifies the means. This is not, however, to say that the order is one of temporal sequence. The decrees are eternal; their relationship is logical, not chronological.²³ Philpot says that there is no prior or posterior in God's counsel, but it is described like this so that we can begin to understand God's decrees.²⁴ Hence, Supralapsarianism is basically anthropomorphic.

21. Comm on Rom. 9:21. So too S & T, vol.II, p.66; Crisp, CAE, vol.II, p.60; Ames, Marrow of Theology, pp.99, 154; S.E. Pierce, Sermons Doctrinal, vol.II, p.401 (Pierce sees this as basis for Pre-Existerian Christology. Cf. Chapter V below); Pink, Letters, p.75; Election and Justification, p.66; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, p.162. But note Jonathan Edwards: "And the maxim, that what is first in intention, is last in execution, does not in the least concern this matter" (Works, 1834 ed., vol.II, p.541).

22. Voice, pp.151-152 (cf. p.136). So too Herman Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, pp.26, 522 (cf. G. Hoeksema, Therefore, pp.279-280; DeJong, p.113); Hussey, Glory, pp.112, 169-170.

23. Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, p.392; vol.II, p.26; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.163-167.

24. Meditations, vol.III, p.73. So too, basically, Gill, Body, p.185 (cf. Seymour, p.95). Pink exhibits a similar teleology with regard to the temporal relationship between the historical ordo salutis. Concerning the new birth proceeding faith, he says: "The priority contended for ... is rather in order of nature than of time, just as the effect must ever be preceded by the cause" (Sovereignty, p.91).

The crux of the decretal discussion, says Hoeksema, is "what, in God's counsel, occupies the place of end or purpose, and what of means to that end?"²⁵ All parties agree that the ultimate end of all the decrees is the glory of God. But they do not agree on the relationship of the various decrees to that end. In a vital theological axiom, Gill says that God chooses and rejects "men as unfallen with respect to the end, and as fallen with respect to the means".²⁶ What does this mean? The basic order of the decrees according to Supralapsarianism is this:

1. The glory of God.
2. Election of some men to glorify God through God's attribute of love, and rejection of the others to glorify God through the attribute of wrath.
3. Permission of the fall of both groups of men.
4. The sending of Christ to make atonement for the elect alone.
5. The sending of the Holy Spirit to give faith to the elect alone.
6. Creation of both groups.²⁷

Several observations should be made concerning this order. Firstly, there is some disagreement among Supras as to whether election and reprobation are to be viewed as occupying equal status. Most feel that reprobation is subordinate, not co-ordinate, to election. We will discuss this more in the section below.

Secondly, and most importantly, is the question about election/reprobation preceding the fall. For Gill, the crucial point here is that "all were on an equal level when the choice was made, whether they were considered as corrupt or pure".²⁸ Non-Supralapsarians agree, but Gill goes on to state that somehow this means that God viewed both parties in 'the pure mass' of unfallen humanity. If the choice and rejection of men concerned sin in any way, the ultimate decision could not be based immediately upon God's sovereign will. His choice of some

25. IK, vol.II, p.204.

26. Comm on Eph. 1:4. Cf. Cause, p.156; Body, p.185.

27. Hoeksema lists the decrees and sub-decrees in considerable detail in Dogmatics, pp.161-165, though his details differ from the above in a few minor particulars. Some Supralapsarians, especially the Pre-Existerians, place the decree of the election of Christ between the first and second decrees in the above list in order to give Christ the pre-eminency in all things and to show how election is 'in Christ'. See Chapter V below.

28. S & T, vol.III, pp.105-106. Moreover, "There could be nothing in the one, which was not in the other, that could be the cause of such a difference" (Comm on Rom. 9:11). Cf. Body, pp.184-185.

is based directly upon love; rejection is based (at this stage) directly upon hatred.²⁹

But was it not unjust for God to reject men irrespective of sin? No, say the Supralapsarians, for all men in the unfallen mass had no claim upon God's love.³⁰ In history, of course, this is amplified by the presence of sin, for in sin, men relinquish all rights. But in the decrees even the unfallen mass did not deserve love. Critics of this scheme disagree. They sometimes argue that in the Creation decree, which preceded the decrees governing the fall and election/reprobation, God gave love to all men. Hence, God gave them a right to love, so to speak, or to be more accurate, a gracious privilege. This is particularly emphasized by Low Calvinists, for they continue it into the realm of salvation for all men, while High Calvinists limit it only to the elect via the division of special and common grace previous to the atonement decree.

Gill attempts to base his Supra view upon an exegesis of several Biblical passages, especially Romans 9. For example, he indicates the meaning of Rom. 9:21 as follows:

... if men, in predestination, were considered in the corrupt mass, or as fallen creatures, they could not be so well said to be made out of it, both to honour and dishonour; but rather since they were all dishonourable, some were left in that dishonour, and others were removed from it unto honour.³¹

Another argument for the 'pure mass' is that "elect angels could not be considered in the corrupt mass, when chosen; since they never fell"; and therefore men were chosen in the same manner - in the 'pure mass'.³²

29. Cause, p.82; Comm on Rom. 9:11.

30. Cf. Cause, p.72; Zanchius, Predestination, p.117. "Grace is always undeserved", be it viewed Infra or Supra, says Homer Hoeksema, and "the position of the supralapsarian is if anything stronger on this point than that of the infralapsarian" (Voice, p.164. Cf. pp.121-122).

31. Comm on Rom. 9:21.

32. Body, pp.183-184, 192-193; S & T¹, vol.II, p.72. Another similar argument concerns the election of Christ's human nature out of the pure mass (Body, p.184). Gill does not specify the exact order of the election of these three, but we may suppose it to be this: Christ, men, angels. Certainly Christ was the first. But if this is the order, then the historical order has Christ the last. Critics say this diminishes Christ's pre-eminency, while Supras say that it

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A vital argument put forth concerns Romans 9:11, "being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil". Supralapsarians think that this refers to the decree of the fall, while others feel that it speaks of the fall in history. A Supra like Gill often quotes this verse to substantiate the theory of the election of pure grace from a pure mass, while a Sub would refer to it to describe how the eternal election of grace followed the decree of sin.³³ Similar to this argument there is the one which concerns the 'known rule' (sic) of means and ends. That is, the decree to elect to life must precede the decree of the fall, or else the elect would historically gain life only to lose it at a later time.³⁴ But this is based upon the Supra principle that the order of the decrees is the opposite of the historical order. Critics of Supralapsarianism might well wish to suggest at this point that the Supra scheme indeed has everything backwards!

It would appear that the various schemes discussed here are incompatible. Certainly there are definite points of disagreement. And yet several Supralapsarians have conceded that the points of difference should not be stressed.³⁵ Perhaps this may be because they realize that most Reformed theologians were not Supra. We cannot say. But Gill, for one, confessed that "for my own part, I think that both may be taken

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refers to His eschatological glory. And the angels? Supras do not comment on the theory that men were elected to replace the reprobate angels. On the other hand, since history is the reverse of the decrees, it may be theorized that their election and rejection followed that of the elect men. Moreover, angels are the servants of the elect; and though in a certain cosmological way they are presently higher than (elect) men, eschatologically the elect men will be greater than the angels - for the elect will be Christ's bride and will judge angels. For further on the election of angels, see Chapter V.

33. This is much the same as the argument that election is of grace and not of mercy, for mercy specifically has to do with sin and misery. See S & T¹, vol.II, pp.70-71. On the other hand, see also Comm on Romans 9, which describes grace and mercy in virtually synonymous ways. The point, discussed later in Chapters V and XI, is vital. Critics sometimes charge that Supralapsarianism removes grace from election and therefore from salvation in history. Long seems guilty of this criticism in his statement, "God does not love sinners, but saints" (Calvinism Popularized, p.64). This paves the way for the rejection of the Free Offer, for Hyper-Calvinists feel that God invites men as 'sensible (repentant) sinners' and not 'as sinners per se'. See Chapter VIII.

34. S & T¹, vol.II, p.66.

35. Cf. Warfield, Calvin and Calvinism, pp.363-364; Toon, HC, pp.109-110; Seymour, p.94; New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, vol.II, p.362. This was one of the main propositions by Brine in Motives to Love and Unity Among Calvinists, Who Differ in Some Points, but not so much in his Remarks. Even Hussey conceded the point, in Glory, pp.112-113, 169-170.

in".³⁶ He agreed with William Twisse, 'that famous Supralapsarian', that

as for the ordering of God's decrees, upon which only arise the different opinions touching the object of predestination, it is merely apex logicus, a point of logic.³⁷

Gill sums up the similarities between Supralapsarianism and Sublapsarianism as follows:

the difference is not so great as may be thought at first sight; for both agree in the main and material things in the doctrine of election; as 1. That it is personal and particular, is of persons by name, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. 2. That it is absolute and unconditional, not depending on the will of men, nor on anything to be done by the creature. 3. That it is wholly owing to the will and pleasure of God; and not to the faith, holiness, obedience, and good works of men; nor to a foresight of all or any of these. 4. That both elect, and non-elect, are considered alike, and are upon an equal foot in the decree of predestination; as those that are for the corrupt mass, they suppose that they were considered in it equally alike, so that there was nothing in the one that was not in the other, which was a reason why the one should be chosen and the other left; so that those that are for the pure mass, suppose both to be considered in the same, and as not yet born, and having done neither good nor evil. 5. That it is an eternal act in God, and not temporal; or which commenced not in time, but from all eternity; for it is not the opinion of the sublapsarians, that God passed the decree of election after men were actually created and fallen; only that they were considered in the divine mind, from all eternity, in the decree of election, as if they were created and fallen; wherefore, though they differ in the consideration of the object of election, as thus and thus diversified, yet they agree in the thing, and agree to differ, as they should, and not charge one another with unsoundness and heterodoxy; for which there is no reason.³⁸

Supralapsarians usually discuss election and reprobation in the section on divine sovereignty rather than soteriology. But then, so do most Sublapsarians, while most Low Calvinists place the discussion in

36. Body, p.185.

37. S & T¹, vol.II, p.66. Cf. Body, p.185. The quote is from Twisse, The Riches of God's Love Unto the Vessels of Mercy, Part I, p.35. Cf. Cunningham, Reformers, p.363; Proctor, p.297.

38. Body, pp.184-185. Cf. S & T¹, vol.II, p.66; Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, pp. 203-204; Bavinck, The Doctrine of God, pp.382-394.

the midst of soteriology. Some scholars therefore feel that it is significant that Calvin relocated his treatment from Theology Proper to Soteriology (from Book I to Book III of the Institutes). Be that as it may, there is another observation to be made on the location of the treatment and that is this: If Supralapsarians choose to discuss the high doctrines of election and reprobation so soon into their Systematic Theologies, it is no wonder that they insist on preaching it with such zeal immediately in their preaching - even when speaking to non-Christians. Some Sublapsarians and virtually all Low Calvinists prefer to preach the basic doctrines of God and the Gospel without reference to election or reprobation. They sometimes choose to preach Christ crucified as the only stumbling-block, recognizing that preaching election and reprobation can easily become an unnecessary hindrance to unbelievers.

Parallel to this problem is the matter of assurance. Supralapsarians - indeed also all Sublapsarians who believe in putting the election decree before the atonement decree - are forced to teach that one must come to assurance that he is elect before he can deduce that he is one of those for whom the Saviour died. Low Calvinists take great issue with Particularists on this point, for they feel that sin (the fall decree) effectively stands in the way between men and election unless the atonement is a bridge. That is, sinners cannot know that they are elect until they first savingly believe that Christ died for them. Lows say that we must first come to the cross, not election. One is revealed, the other is secret, so far as the Gospel is concerned. Otherwise, both are secret.

Another criticism levelled by Low Calvinists is that the other two schemes base election on bare grace apart from the atonement decree. Hence, God decreed to accept the elect apart from Calvary. Some add that this destroys election 'in Christ'. In history it is reflected in a semi-Abelardian view of the atonement.³⁹ Moreover, if Christ died for men as elect, then He died for them as pure and therefore not as sinners. And this effectively limits the Gospel call. And still other Low Calvinists charge the other two systems (especially the Supra scheme) with making election rather than the atonement the greatest display of grace.⁴⁰

39. On Abelard's views of the atonement in relation to love, see Chapter IX, Section A.

40. S.E. Pierce is susceptible to this criticism when he affirms that God chose the elect in
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How do Supralapsarians reply to these criticisms? Usually by silence or evasion. A few, however, have given some statements bearing on the issues in hand. For example, Pink states that the ultimate end in the decrees is the glory of God and not the salvation of men. "The supralapsarian system makes God the beginning, centre and end thereof; whereas sub-lapsarianism makes Man the centre and circumference".⁴¹ This gets back to the same choice we have referred to already: that if one must choose, one should choose God rather than Man, sovereignty rather than responsibility, sovereignty over love.

Thomas Goodwin sought to make a few alterations to Supralapsarianism as he found it. He claimed to prefer a 'third option' which is neither Sub nor Supra. In this system God sees all things in an instant: "the decree of end and that of means were both in God's mind at once, and in it neither had a priority or a posterity".⁴² Goodwin could easily have developed this into a theory which was a valid option to the other two, but he failed to do so. Goodwin remained basically a Supralapsarian, though his reservations bear noting.

Herman Bavinck seems to have picked up on Goodwin's thoughts and rejected both Supralapsarianism and Sublapsarianism (or Infralapsarianism, as he calls it). He admitted that, yes, there was much truth in both senses. But they tend to injure the infinity of eternity by speaking (though anthropomorphically) of eternity lineally. Rather, says Bavinck, eternity has no before or after. Therefore the decrees are to be viewed co-ordinately rather than sub-ordinately. They co-ordinate towards the great goal of the glory of God.⁴³ And yet Bavinck still maintained limited atonement. One could speculate that as Goodwin was a Supra with reservations, so Bavinck was a Sub with reservations.

There are various alternatives from the Low Calvinist perspective. One is Amyraut's theory of 'Hypothetical Universalism'. Another is the Universalism of Karl Barth. The two should not be confused, however,

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Christ and then allowed them to fall "to give the utmost demonstration of God's love to the elect" (Death of Christ, p.6).

41. Letters, p.55.

42. Works, vol.IX, p.8. Cf. p.344.

43. The Doctrine of God, p.394.

for though they have certain similarities there are distinct differences. This is not the place for an analysis of them, nor do we claim mastery of their views. We merely add that they are but two alternatives.

Since the doctrine of reprobation is of particular significance in the discussion on the order of the decrees, it is proper that we investigate the Hyper-Calvinist view of it at this time.

B. REPROBATION

The question of the order of the decrees to some extent revolves around the question of reprobation. High Calvinists had accepted the doctrine but did not explain it as fully as the Supralapsarians. This is important to remember - the Puritan Federalists did accept the doctrine of reprobation. The difference was in a specific point of explaining it in terms of means and end. This difference is mostly a matter of emphasis and is minor when both positions are compared with the Amyraldian, Arminian and Deist positions. Indeed, it is one of the main propositions of this thesis that almost all the differences between High and Hyper-Calvinism are relatively minor.

Reprobation was taught in the Westminster Confession (Ch.III), the Savoy Confession (Ch.III) and the Baptist Confession of 1689 (Ch.III) in nearly identical wording. None of these standards provide as full a description of reprobation as for election. Beza, Perkins, Ames and Twisse, of course, strongly held to reprobation. A lower view was held by many of the lower Calvinists like Bunyan, Whitefield, Fuller, and Spurgeon.¹ Fuller took a lower view than most Highs and he specifically associated the higher doctrine with Antinomianism.² Needless to say, it was firmly rejected by Whitby, Wesley and all Deists. Wesley called it "a cloven foot"³ and incorrectly and sarcastically represents Gill as claiming that Paul was reprobate and that common grace is damning grace.⁴ Reprobation was one of the chief points of contention between Gill and Wesley in their tract war. A writer almost as prolific as

1. Bunyan, Reprobation Asserted, in Works, vol.II; Coppedge, p.85; Kirkby, pp.71, 188-191; Thornton, pp.75-80. Good erroneously says that Spurgeon rejected reprobation (pp.76, 81, 126), whereas in fact Spurgeon only rejected the Supralapsarian doctrine of reprobation. On Calvin's views see especially his Comm on Romans 9; Predestination; and his sermons on Jacob and Esau. Cf. also John Murray, Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty, pp.58-64; Amyraut, Doctrinae Joannis Cavini, de Absolvo Reprobationis Decreto; and Rolston, The Understanding of Sin and Responsibility in the Teaching of John Calvin. A good review of the various Reformed theories of reprobation is found in Heppe, Reformed Dogmatics, pp.178-189. There are numerous works from a Low Calvinist perspective, such as Morison's work on Romans 9.

2. Fuller, Works, p.338. Since he is speaking of Doctrinal Antinomianism, which is virtually the same as Hyper-Calvinism, we point out that others have defined or described Hyper-Calvinism in terms of the doctrine of reprobation (e.g., Jackson, Concise Dictionary of Religious Knowledge, p.395; Rice, Predestined for Hell?, pp.9-19).

3. Quoted in Gill, S & T, vol.III, p.119. Fletcher calls the Calvinist doctrine of reprobation "free wrath" (Works, vol.I, p.415; vol.IV, p.185).

4. Wesley, Answer, pp.5, 7.

Wesley, Gill provided detailed explanations for what he considered to be the Biblical position.⁵

Now Gill confessed that "reprobation is not so plentifully spoken of" as election in the Scripture.⁶ Therefore, much needs to be learned by inference according to the scant Biblical teaching together with other Biblical doctrines and principles. Likewise, Scripture says next to nothing about the reprobation of angels, though some things can be deduced from the statements concerning their fall. Gill gave a detailed explanation about the subject also.⁷ However, Gill does not expound any doctrine of the reprobation of Christ in any form. This theory was later presented by John MacLeod Campbell in the nineteenth century and drew the parallel between Christ's pre-eminent election and His pre-eminent reprobation. This theory, it must be noted, could arise only out of a system of universal atonement, though it has been repudiated by almost all Low Calvinists, Amyraldians and Arminians. Certain Neo-Orthodox Calvinists have developed it, notably Karl Barth.

Gill contends that even if Scripture was entirely silent on reprobation, the same doctrine could be inferred from the doctrine of election,⁸ for "to choose, implies the contrary".⁹ In brief, then, reprobation is 'non-election'.¹⁰ These two internal acts occurred at the same time in God's decrees.¹¹ Gill technically prefers the term

5. See especially Body, pp.192-198; Comm on Romans 9; and relevant sections in Cause. For Gill's doctrine, see Seymour, pp.163-166. Other Hyper-Calvinist treatments include: Wells, Reprobation and Election; Silver, Sovereignty, pp.65-93; Stevens, The Words of Truth, pp.49-55; Pink, Sovereignty of God, pp.99-133; Homer Hoeksema, Voice (often); Herman Hoeksema, God's Eternal Good Pleasure (an exposition of Romans 9-11). There are numerous non-Hyper works on Supralapsarian reprobation, the most well-known being Twisse's Riches.

6. S & T, vol.III, p.112.

7. Body, pp.192-193.

8. Body, p.193.

9. Comm on Eph. 1:4. Cf. Comm on Jude 4; Engelsma, pp.45-46.

10. Cause, p.70; Body, p.194; Comm on Rom. 11:7. Often it is said that the doctrines of election and reprobation stand and fall together (e.g. Whitefield, Works, vol.IV, p.58 (cf. pp.67, 72); Hanko, in Hanko et al, p.36).

11. Comm on Rom. 9:11, Jude 4. There is some disagreement among Hyper-Calvinists on this point. The higher ones take Gill's line, while the lower ones contend that election takes the precedence over reprobation. For instance, Homer Hoeksema: "election and reprobation are as to their purposes by no means coordinate, but rather that reprobation follows election in the order of the divine decrees, and is subordinate to it" (Voice, p.247). But so far as the acts of choice and rejection go, "election and reprobation are very much coordinate in respect to their attributes" (ibid., p.243). Herman Hoeksema: "Reprobation follows election, and the former serves the

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'rejection', but also uses 'non-election' and even 'disapprobation', though the harsh term 'reprobation' is still correct and is the term he used most frequently.¹²

Reprobation, like election, is grounded solely upon God's sovereignty. This is the primary cause in the matter and the final end is God's own glory.¹³ In another of his oft-repeated maxims he says that "God made man neither to damn him, nor to save him, but for his own glory".¹⁴ As we noted earlier, God receives glory through the manifestation of His several attributes. It is with a view to this manifestation that God planned the decrees. In reprobation God planned to reveal His justice, wrath, power, hatred, wisdom, patience, longsuffering, and mercy.¹⁵ This final end is according to His sovereign intention and is necessarily fulfilled.

Furthermore, there is the crucial principle concerning damnation expressed in another of his favourite axioms:

as God damns no man, but for sin, so he decreed to damn no man, but for sin; and surely this cannot be thought to strike severely against the justice of God.¹⁶

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latter" (Dogmatics, p.334). However, the difference between Gill and the Hoeksemas should not be pressed, for here the Hoeksemas indicate that there is a sense in which the two decrees are coordinate and as we shall see later Gill believed that there is a sense in which the reprobate serve the elect.

12. Body, p.192; Comm on Matt. 10:33. Cf. Huntington, Posthumous Letters, vol.I, p.52. Similarly, election is sometimes described as approbation (e.g., Huntington, Substance, p.43; Parks, Notes of Sermons, p.61). See Chapter V below.

13. Cf. Comm on Pro. 16:4, Ex. 9:16; S & T², vol.III, p.111; Cause, pp.72, 162. Pink: "in forming Pharaoh God displayed neither justice nor injustice, but only bare sovereignty" (Sovereignty, p.111). This is essential to the Supra scheme. Zanchius summed up the Supra view on this point: "As the future faith and good works of the elect were not the cause of their being chosen, so neither were the future sins of the reprobate the cause of their being passed by, but both the choice of the former and the decretive omission of the latter were owing, merely and entirely, to the sovereign will and determining pleasure of God" (Absolute Predestination, SGU edition, pp.108-109). Zanchius then goes on to differentiate preterition and reprobation. What Pink calls 'bare sovereignty', Hoeksema calls in the title of his book God's Eternal Good Pleasure. "And the ultimate, deepest cause of a man's eternal destiny is God's sovereign decree. But the ground of a man's condemnation and damnation is his sin" (Good Pleasure, p.111). Thus, "God realizes His sovereign reprobation in a manner that is in harmony with man's responsibility" (p.52).

14. S & T², vol.III, p.111. So also Cause, pp.72, 162.

15. Comm on Pro. 16:4, Rom. 9:13; Body, p.74; S & T¹, vol.II, p.72; S & T², vol.III, pp.111, 119. Sin therefore is a means of glorifying God, though this does not give any man a licence to sin (cf. Comm on Rom. 6:1 and Chapter X below). Even so, as Homer Hoeksema said, "the reprobate evidently are not necessary to reveal God's power and wrath and righteousness" (Voice, p.246).

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This is important because "the same decree which permits sin, provides for the punishment of it".¹⁷ This is best understood in seeing the two sides of reprobation as preterition and predamnation.¹⁸

Preterition is specifically Supralapsarian. God sees men in the 'pure mass'. The elect are chosen for salvation, the others are left for damnation. Preterition is 'negative reprobation'.¹⁹ It does not immediately concern the question of the existence of sin. Being left, however, these non-elected ones are decreed to fall, and this decree is simultaneous with the decree to allow the elect to fall.²⁰

Since these rejected ones are predetermined to sin, God justly determines to damn them for their sin and to provide no salvation or atonement for them. This is the decree of predamnation or 'positive reprobation'.²¹ This predamnation is mediate; sin is the means and is "the cause of the thing willed, damnation".²² Gill declares that

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16. S & T¹, vol.II, p.72. So also Cause, pp.76, 156; Comm on Rom. 9:14; S & T², vol.III, p.111; Tucker, p.156; Twisse, Riches, Part I, p.109; Brine, Vindication, p.326 (quoting Twisse).

17. Cause, p.194.

18. See especially Body, pp.194-195. This division, of course, was not new. On earlier Supras employing it, see Heppe, pp.180-181.

19. Cause, p.152; S & T², vol.III, p.110; Comm on Rom. 9:14. Wilks (pp.71-72) later wrote that reprobation is active ordination and not merely permission. It is not entirely clear whether he is speaking of reprobation proper or, more likely, preterition.

20. Cf. Cause, p.72; S & T¹, vol.II, p.72; S & T², vol.III, p.110-111; Comm on Eph. 1:4.

21. Cause, p.152; Comm on Rom. 9:14; S & T², vol.III, p.110.

22. S & T¹, vol.II, p.72. Cf. Cause, p.72. Hence, man and not God is to be blamed for his damnation. The responsibility of man is protected. Stevens: "The non-elect will be condemned, but not at all because they are not elected", but because they have sinned (Memoirs of Stevens, p.233). Most parties concerned would agree with Bellamy, a Low Calvinist, on this point: "The horribleness of the so-called decretum horrible largely disappears if men remain responsible for their sins and choices" (Works, vol.II, p.197). On the other hand, the highest Hyper-Calvinists over-react against this balance and border on placing the blame on God. Wells denies "that if men are lost, it is their own fault; this position I deny, and assert that it is not their own fault ... to which I answer, there is no fault in the matter" (Reprobation and Election, p.41). Styles said much the same thing (Guide, p.76). This view of non-blame in the decrees is the precursor of their view that in the application of the decrees in time, there is a sense in which men are not to be blamed for rejecting the Gospel. See our discussion in Chapter VIII.

sin is not the cause of God's decree, but of the thing decreed, eternal death; otherwise all the individuals of the world being equally in sin, must have been rejected.²³

By this Gill means that preterition needed to precede predamnation or else there would be no election of anyone. There would only be rejection. It is a point aimed at challenging the Sublapsarians that their position is correct only in so far as preparing for the fuller analysis of Supralapsarianism. As we shall see later, salvation is as inherent in election as damnation is in rejection. In this context Gill puts forth the principle which he feels bridges the two decretal positions. It is that God chooses and rejects "men, considered as unfallen with respect to the end, and as fallen with respect to the means".²⁴

It appears that the division of preterition and predamnation is according to the actual-virtual pattern. Preterition (negative reprobation) does not infuse anything; it acts immediately (without sin as a means); it merely leaves men in the mass and to themselves. Predamnation (positive reprobation) infuses something; it acts mediately (through sin); it damns those left in the mass. Preterition is first and virtual in relation to predamnation, which is second and actual. Since predamnation deals with that which is actually in men (sin) and eventually infuses wrath, it is actual reprobation.

The problem of the existence of sin still remains. Sin is pre-determined as a means. Sublapsarians generally leave it as a mystery of necessity and sovereignty, and the lowest Calvinists often join with Arminians and others in explaining the problem with respect to other factors. Those who hold to either no or other decretal positions may well agree with Gill's contention that the differences between the Supra and Sub positions are only a 'point of logic', mostly verbal differences. With an ironic use of terminology, these others may even claim that the two positions are virtually but not actually the same; they are equal

23. Comm on Rom. 9:11. Cf. Comm on Rom. 6:1; Engelsma, p.44.

24. Comm on Eph. 1:4. Wilks: "reprobation is as much irrespective of bad works as election is of good ones" (p.20). Similarly Palmer: "Men were not elected because they were good, nor rejected because they were bad" (Epitome, p.12). Preterition and election are based upon bare sovereignty and not upon prescience in any way. In a sense, however, predamnation has a relevance to the prescience of sin.

but not identical. Curiously, the High (Sublapsarian) Calvinists deny the similarity with either Hyper-Calvinists on the one hand or the others (Low Calvinists, Arminians et al) on the other. High Calvinists often stress the differences they have with Hyper-Calvinists and vigorously deny holding the same position. In fairness it may be added that both High and Hyper-Calvinists often tend to consider Low Calvinism (Amyraldianism) more Arminian than Calvinist, a charge vigorously denied by Amyraldians and many Arminians. It may be remembered that these 'Five Point' Calvinists emphasized that the five points stand and fall together; hence, 'Four Point' Calvinists were often seen by them as inconsistent.

With vigorous polemics at times they opposed what they considered to be an Arminian wolf in Calvinist sheep's clothing. In a similar vein, an Arminian who held to the Calvinist perseverance of the saints while otherwise remaining a four point Arminian was still viewed as a one-point Calvinist and therefore a latent Calvinist, a Calvinist in disguise. Such a one, however, was considered almost entirely an Arminian by the 'Five Pointers' and even by some 'Four Pointers'.

There is one thing that gives particular credence to this theory that Gill's reasoning follows the actual-virtual pattern. Gill himself admits that the Biblical teaching on God's hatred is anthropopathic.²⁵ In Chapter II we mentioned the close relationship between the actual-virtual scheme and anthropopathism. Now when Gill describes reprobation he says many things about God's hatred. The divine attribute of hatred is particularly manifested in reprobation²⁶ and is similar to, but not identical with, divine wrath. Nowhere is the attribute of hatred better manifested than in the Biblical teaching about the love of Jacob and the hatred of Esau.

Consequently Gill felt that preterition is caused by God's negative hatred, and predamnation by positive hatred.²⁷ Concerning the former

25. Body, p.40. Popham: "both love and hatred are in God, in Him as infinite perfections" (Counsel, p.38). On hatred, as such, in God, see Hoeksema, TK, vol.II, pp.402-404; vol.III, pp.308-310.

26. E.g., "reprobation indeed flows from his hatred, which is an appointment to wrath" (S & T, vol.III, p.119). Cf. Comm on Rom. 9:13.

27. Cf. Comm on Rom. 9:13, Job 16:9, Malachi 1:3.

he says that "The Scriptures speak of an hatred of some persons antecedent to sin, and without the consideration of it".²⁸ This is the sort of theology that makes Low Calvinists, Arminians, and others cringe and protest. To them this statement sounds dangerously close to saying that God hates some people without a cause. Some refer to John 15:25, "They hated me without a cause". Gill is forced to explain what he means by divine hatred in preterition.

To him the word is used in different ways in Scripture. There is, of course, the sinful hatred men have of God. This hatred is antithetical to love. As love is the essence of obeying God, hatred is the essence of disobeying God. To understand this better one needs to look at divine love, for one loves God because God loves Him (Arminians and others sometimes contend that no man can love God unless God loves everyone). Sometimes to hate means to love less.²⁹ But usually hatred is "the very opposite of love".³⁰ It is not neutral. He withholds grace when He hates³¹ and this is His sovereign prerogative to do. But even this withholding of love is because He has hatred for those under consideration. As a result of this negative hatred there is positive hatred. In this positive and active hatred men are "considered as profane and ungodly persons, and as such [are] foreordained to condemnation".³²

Many Arminians and some Low Calvinists believe that the only hatred God has in the decree of rejection is that of either less love than in election or a different kind of love or hatred altogether. Many

28. Body, p.101. Conversely, with regard to the elect, God can hate the act of sin but not the sinner (J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.II, p.404). See Chapter XI below.

29. E.g., Comm on Deut. 21:15, Luke, 14:26. Cf. Brine, Refutation of Arminian Principles, pp.34-35. Herman Hoeksema preached a sermon once which was entitled 'Hatred Yet Beloved' (Good Pleasure, p.342), but this refers to the fact that God's elect are sinners and as such can be described as "hated"; he does not apply this specifically to the reprobate. His son Homer Hoeksema denied that "hated" ever means "loved less" or "loved also" (Voice, p.191).

30. Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, p.71. So too Gill, Body, p.40; Comm on Job 16:9. Styles considered the hatred of Romans 9 to be "the negation of love" (Manual, p.27). Earlier Supralapsarians had varying ideas about this view, though they were in basic agreement. Perkins stated that, "it is one thing to hate, and another to appoint to hatred" (Works, vol.I, p.109. Cf. pp.279-280). Twisse: "to ordain to damnation I should think is to hate rather than to love" (Riches, Part II, p.161).

31. Cf. Cause, p.150; S & T¹, vol.II, p.72; Comm on John 12:40.

32. Comm on Job 16:9.

Arminians have not made any distinctions between special and common grace, and this is reflected in their views of hatred.

Then there is the matter of God's blinding and hardening men's hearts. If reprobation occurs in the eternal decrees, this blinding action occurs in the temporal Providence that enacts the decrees. As one may expect, Gill retreats to the positive-negative scheme to explain it. The following quotes are representative of his position:

God or Christ blind not by any positive act, but by leaving and giving men up to the blindness and hardness of their hearts, and denying them the grace which could only cure them, and which they are not obliged to give.³³

... men first harden their own hearts by sinning, as Pharoah did; what God does, is by leaving them to the hardness of their hearts, denying them that grace which only can soften them.³⁴

This is negative hardening. It should be remembered that Gill viewed the flow of history as occurring in the opposite chronology to the order of the decrees, according to the axiom, "what is the first in intention is last in execution". If the negative hatred in preterition preceded the positive hatred in predamnation, so the negative hardening in Providence follows the positive allowing men to sin. This is what is meant by "giving over to a reprobate mind". This shifts the problem further back to the origin of sin, and this permission to sin is also in the decree. (We shall investigate this aspect of the problem in the next section of this chapter.)

Three brief points need to be noted before we continue with the problem. First, Gill says that the reprobate are "serviceable" to the elect, "for all things are for their good".³⁵ God's main concern is for the good of the elect, and the way in which He deals with the reprobate is something of a by-product. This follows the pattern that election is positive and reprobation negative.

33. Comm on John 12:40. Cf. S & T¹, vol.II, p.72.

34. Comm on Rom. 9:18.

35. Cause, p.83. Hoeksema: "For even as the chaff must serve the wheat, so the reprobate must be subservient to the realization of the glorification of the elect Church of Christ" (Good Pleasure, p.21. Cf. p.85). Compare also Hoeksema's view of the reprobate in the sphere of the Covenant (Believers, pp.132-145. See Chapter V below).

Secondly, Gill denied the charge that the doctrine of reprobation opens the Antinomian possibility that the reprobate can claim that they never had a fair chance, that the deck of cards was stacked against them, and in effect that God had cheated them.³⁶ Gill replied that a reprobate is condemned for his sin and is as guilty as the elect. They have no intrinsic right to election any more than do the elect, nor any less. What is in them is according to the sovereignty of the will of God. No man can answer back to God. The analogy is made to a criminal, who is condemned and executed because of his crime and not mainly because of the lack of pardon.³⁷ The lack of pardon may be the final cause, but the efficient cause is his crime. In other words, Gill refers back to the dictum, "as God damns no man, but for sin, so he decreed to damn no man, but for sin".

Thirdly, Gill does not claim to have been able to recognize who the reprobate are. Nor, for that matter, who the elect are before their conversions. This has a special application to prayer:

though no one person is to be excluded from our prayer on the account of the decree of reprobation, since no man can certainly be known to be a reprobate; yet it does not become us to pray for the conversion and salvation of reprobates in general, since this would be contrary to the decree of God.³⁸

This has important implications for the Modern Question. Gill held

36. This was one of the charges against Gill in the anonymous tract entitled A Sufferer for Truth, p.21. Fuller made similar implications. Parks noted that though some persons consider the reprobation of men to be unjust, nobody thinks the reprobation of Satan and the fallen angels to be unjust or unfair (Five Points, p.33). Similarly, he added, if it was not unjust of God not to send Christ to die for Satan and the reprobate angels, surely it was not unjust that Christ did not die for reprobate men (p.51).

37. S & T¹, vol.I, p.82.

38. Comm on I John 5:14. No man can know if he is reprobate as long as he is in this world, said Pink (Sovereignty, p.195). "Reprobation then is a secret as to persons, but not as to the doctrine itself", wrote Wells (Reprobation and Election, p.41), for if men could know who was elect and who was reprobate they would be so weighed down by the awesomeness of eternal judgment that they would be unfit for the present life (Moral Government, p.35). Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.254-255; vol.II, p.44; Pink, Sovereignty, p.125; Hoeksema, Believers, p.135. Contrary to this, Huntington taught that though God has ordained prayer as a means by which He blesses His people, we are not "allowed so much as to pray for such as bear the evident tokens of perdition, or of the unpardonable sin" (Works, vol.XII, pp.400-401). The motif is discussed again later in Chapters VIII and X.

that Christians can discern in some degree who are elect. They cannot discover a man's election before the man is actually converted, but one can look for certain marks which evidence that one is a Christian and therefore is elect. This pertains to evangelism in that we can discern who are 'sensible sinners'. These 'sensible sinners' are necessarily Christians, though probably only recently regenerated. They are elect. Now a Christian, especially a minister of the Word, can preach the Gospel to a 'sensible sinner' in a way in which he cannot to a non-sensible sinner. He can say certain things only to a Christian which he cannot say to a non-Christian, such as what personally pertains to election and the atonement. He can, for instance, tell a person that he is elect. This does not mean that he tells all others that they are reprobate. At best he can speak to those non-Christians as if they might be elect but not yet converted. Then again, we find Gill also implying that we should be cautious to speak with unconverted men, remembering that they may be reprobate. We must be careful not to give a non-converted man any suggestion that he is elect, only that he may be elect. We must also tell the unconverted that they may not be elect, in which case we should tell them what reprobation is all about. Hopefully this description will stir them to faith, for if the unconverted man is elect God may very well use that word to convict and quicken him in faith. If he is reprobate, nothing is lost.

As for prayer, there is nothing to prohibit our praying for the conversion of an unconverted person, but due caution must be exercised. We must not pray that God elect him, for election has already occurred. Such a prayer is unnecessary and lacking in the faith that recognizes the deterministic sovereignty of God. In prayer one must remember that the Lord will save His elect whether we pray for them or not, and that no amount of praying or faith will persuade God to save one who is reprobate.

This is reflected in our evangelism as well. If the Hyper-Calvinist form of prayer is seriously affected by the rigid view of reprobation, the stagnancy of the doctrine also deadens its evangelism in theory and in practice. There can be no free offer, for such seems to imply that God sincerely wishes all men to be saved. There can be no mourning for the lost who are dying and eternally perishing, for they are reprobate and were never loved by God. It is no wonder, then, that many Low Calvinists have opposed the high doctrine of reprobation because of the

lethargy it infuses into the Church's evangelism. Granted, some Lows such as John Bunyan³⁹ have felt that there is no inconsistency per se between the doctrines of reprobation and the free offer, but even Bunyan saw that the doctrine of limited atonement places hindrances on evangelism. Therefore, Bunyan felt, it is dangerous to put the decree of election and reprobation before that of atonement. Hence the Supralapsarian doctrine of reprobation has definite implications on the very heart of Hyper-Calvinism's rejection of the free offer. And some opponents feel that it has further ramifications for the very basics of the Christian Gospel and the task of evangelism.

39. Bunyan, Works, vol.II, pp.348-352. Engelsma (p.42) contends that those who teach a well-meant free offer inevitably end up denying the doctrine of reprobation. But, we may note, this has not usually been the case in the history of Calvinism. For example, what about the many Puritans who believed in the free offer and reprobation? And even Low Calvinists believe in a low doctrine of reprobation. To be more precise, one should say that many of those holding to a Supralapsarian doctrine of reprobation end up denying the free offer. See Mason's comments in Twisse, Riches, Part II, pp.158-163. In an illustration applicable to reprobation and total depravity, Wilks curiously agreed with the unbeliever who likened the Modern Calvinist to the man who tied the four legs of his horse together and then whipped it because it did not walk on order (p.58).

C. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

The problem of evil is very closely related to the doctrine of reprobation.¹ It is the problem behind the problem. Many of those who do not accept the doctrine of reprobation in a high sense often accuse those who do with teaching that God is the author of sin. So this issue is of prime importance to our discussion.²

Daniel Whitby was an extreme Arminian semi-Deist. He accused both Sublapsarians and Supralapsarians of making God the author of sin. In this he used the usual arguments. Because of his death in the early eighteenth century he could not have had Gill in mind, but Gill responded to his charges with representative Hyper-Calvinist arguments. Gill himself was accused of making God the author of sin. The charge came from both Arminians (Wesley et al) and Deists (Chandler et al). Some of these opponents, such as the anonymous 'Sufferer for Truth', reveal an ignorance of Gill's writings and thought. For example, this anonymous tractarian is ignorant of Gill's assertions that there is a difference between the secret and revealed wills of God and that God uses second causes in Providence. This same author boldly claimed that Gill represented God as worse than sin because a creator is always greater than its creation.³

Nevertheless, the 'Sufferer for Truth' correctly stated the problem of

1. Wilks: "reprobation, however, can only be believed in, by those who believe also, that God decreed the sins of the reprobate" (p.116). Homer Hoeksema said that it is only against Reformed theologians that the charge is made that they make God the author of evil; and this charge is usually made by Arminians (Voice, pp.250, 438-439). Herman Hoeksema said that this charge has a lineage going back to the opponents of Paul and more recently, Pelagians, Arminians and free-willers (Good Pleasure, p.66). Homer Hoeksema also felt that it is not only Supralapsarians who have a decree which permits evil; Infralapsarians do as well (Voice, pp.245, 251).

2. Hyper-Calvinism is often described or defined in terms of the problem of evil or making God the author of evil. (So, e.g., Rice, Hell, p.95). This also applies to descriptions of Antinomianism (Young, Encyclopaedia of Christianity, vol.I, p.272), Modern Antinomianism (Wilks, pp.15-16), Absolutism (Pittman, Questions, pp.19-20, 36, 96), Supralapsarianism (Parks, A Sunday-School Dictionary, p.49), and Fatalism (Pittman, Questions, pp.20, 36; Parks, Chastisement, p.14). For Hyper-Calvinist literature, see Long, Calvinism Popularized, pp.160-170; Wilks, pp.70-162; Hartley, The Trial of the Two Opinions Tried; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.245-265; TK, vol.I, pp.75-81; Homer Hoeksema, Voice (often); and especially Tucker's Predestination. For alternatives to the Hyper theory, see Bellamy, Works, vol.II, pp.9-188; Sarrells, Systematic Theology, pp.107-143, 220-222. A brief survey of the various Reformed theories is found in Heppe, pp.326-330.

3. A Sufferer for Truth, pp.1-7. Cf. Gill, S & T¹, vol.I, p.82; Wilks, p.129.

evil in its classic expression according to the irreconcilability of three brief statements, viz: 1. God is holy. 2. God is omnipotent. 3. Evil exists. According to this expression of the problem, one cannot logically reconcile all three. Any two of them nullify the third, thusly: A. If God is holy He must want to prevent or eliminate the existence of evil. If He is omnipotent He is able to fulfill this desire. By a simple syllogism it is concluded that God has prevented or eliminated the existence of evil, and evil does not exist. Thus statement 3 is not true. B. If God is omnipotent the only things that exist must have been created by Him and exist by His permission, for God could easily have been able to prevent it. Since evil does exist, we must conclude that God has willed it to exist. If He has willed evil He cannot not will it at the same time; and only a non-holy being wills evil. Therefore God is not holy, and statement 1 is not correct. C. If God is holy He must want to prevent or eliminate the existence of evil. Whatever one desires, one tries with his power and resources to achieve. Since evil exists, one must conclude that God is not able to prevent it and therefore is not able to carry out the desires of His will. If He is not so able, then He is not omnipotent and statement 2 is incorrect.

The 'Sufferer' contended that Gill implied that God is not fully holy according to the analysis B above.⁴ He did not claim that Gill ever actually asserted that God is not holy; he merely claimed that Gill's emphasis of statements 2 and 3 were greater than his emphasis of 1. He himself tended to C and appeared to be something of a Deist. Deism generally posited that C is closest to the truth according to 'the nature and fitness of things'. That is, evil necessarily exists. In the light of this, one can understand Gill's suggestion that "Mr. Hobbe's opinion makes God the cause of all sinful actions, as well as good".⁵ (Hobbes was an important pre-Deist.) What Gill meant was that Hobbes taught that God was under the law of a higher necessity and according to this higher law willed the existence of evil.

In all areas of his writings Gill repeatedly and forcefully preached that God is not and cannot be the 'author of sin'.⁶ This emotive term

4. A Sufferer for Truth, pp.1-6.

5. Cause, p.188.

6. E.g., Body, pp.74, 105; Cause, pp.156, 188, 194; Comm on Psa. 34:8, 51:5, 106:1, Job 8:3, 34:10. So, too, many others: Philpot, Sermons, vol.II, p.28; vol.III, p.75; Roes, p.139; Calvin, ...Cont'd:

has often been employed in discussions about the problem of evil, notably in the Westminster Confession (V:4). Whether, in fact, Gill's doctrine necessitates the conclusion that God is the author of sin needs close scrutiny.

Gill begins by teaching that God originally created men righteous but they themselves chose to sin. They had something of free agency before the Fall in Adam and Eve. The source of sin, then, is Man and not God.⁷ Man, however, is not the final source of evil, for Man received it from the hands of Satan.⁸ Gill often mentions the Fall of

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Calvinism, p.126; Gadsby, Memoir, p.95; Tucker, p.119 and often; Pittman, Biographical History, p.397; Hassell, History, p.653; Parks, Conversation, p.23; Notes of Sermons, p.11; J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.II, p.383; vol.III, p.147; Wells, Reprobation and Election, p.11; Pink, Godhead, p.32; Gleanings from the Scriptures, p.206 (quoting Gill and Piscator); Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.232-233; IK, vol.I, 77-78, 80; vol.III, pp.18, 185; Good Pleasure, pp.51, 64; Believers, p.81; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.142, 144, 250-251, 439. To allege that God is the author of sin is blasphemy (Parks, Chastisement, p.14; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.250-251, 657) and makes God a liar (Wells, Letters to Theophilus, vol.II, p.245). It was not God who sinned (Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.439), nor can He sin (ibid., p.144), nor can He will anything sinfully (Hoeksema, IK, vol.III, p.542); therefore God is not the author of sin. This has always been held a priori by the Reformed faith (Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.657). "He is neither the Author nor the Approver of sin" (Pink, Sovereignty, p.194). "God is the efficient Author of whatever works of holiness men perform, but He is not the Author of their sins" (Pink, Gleanings from the Scriptures, p.206). On the other hand, Pink asks what the term 'author of sin' actually means, implying that in a sense God is indeed the author of sin (Sovereignty, p.182). While denying that God is the author of sin per se, Wilks quotes Jonathan Edwards to the effect that the phrase can mean several things, including a sense in which God can be said to be the author of sin (Wilks, pp.135-136. For Edwards, see Works, 1834 edition, vol.I, pp.75-79, 217-220). H.A. Long goes the furthest of all: "I can therefore see and say God was the author of evil... He is the author of sin as the sun is the author of shadow, as life is the cause of death" (Calvinism Popularized, p.169). Tucker also questions the meaning of the phrase. He concludes that if it means that God created men sinful, or actively makes men sin, or that He perpetrates sin, then the phrase is not correct (Predestination, p.207).

7. Comm on Pro. 16:4, Isa. 45:7, I Kings 8:38, Rom. 5:12, Eccl. 7:29; Tucker, pp.112, 125, 207-209; Brine, Vindication, p.176; Hoeksema, Believers, p.81; IK, vol.III, p.21; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.144. Philpot said that it was impossible for God to create Man sinful, but He did create Man with the ability to sin (Meditations, vol.I, p.17). Wilks adds that though God originated the Fall of Man and "all subsequent evil connected with man's first transgression", yet it is Man and not God who is the author of sin (p.137). Homer Hoeksema: "while God is certainly not the author of sin, God has sovereignly determined that man shall be the author and cause of his own sin" (Voice, p.251). Many Calvinists contend that sinful men cannot shift the blame onto the Creator, for "Who art thou that repliest against God?" [Rom. 9:20] (So Tucker, pp.124, 154; and others).

8. Comm on Rom. 5:12; Wells, Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, 1866, pp.313-320; Parks, Notes of Sermons, p.11; Hoeksema, IK, pp.121-131; Dogmatics, pp.248-265; Philpot, Sermons, vol.II, p.28; vol.VIII, p.54; Roe, p.139; Tucker, pp.125-128. On the Fall of Satan, see Huntington, Works, vol.XVI, pp.309-363. Wilks: "the origin of all sin committed by fallen angels and men, was according to, yea the very decree or will of God, itself" (p.104).

Satan and the reprobate angels, but in none of his discussions does he attempt to show its relevance to the problem of evil to any great length. In fact, Gill never really discusses the problem at length in any certain place, though in some places he devotes more attention to it than in others. His arguments are scattered in various places, but most of his arguments are found in his discussion about the attributes and immanent works of God.

The origin of evil is ultimately to be found in the permissive will of God, which is part of the secret will. The following simple syllogism is used: Nothing exists which has not been ordained by the secret will of God; moral evil exists; therefore moral evil has been ordained by the secret will of God.⁹ As we have previously observed, Gill felt that the secret will is composed of the effective (positive) will and the permissive (negative) will. It is according to the effective will that God wills good and according to the permissive will that He wills evil.¹⁰ God would indeed be the author of sin according to the Arminian charge if He willed evil according to the effective will. It is according to a 'voluntary permission' that evil is allowed, and this is voluntary. It is not imposed on Him by a higher law of necessity, as suggested by Deists.¹¹

We note at this point a twist in his theory of causality. Gill held that sin has "no efficient, but only a deficient cause".¹² God is the first and final cause of all things, and therefore He is the first and

9. S & T¹, vol.II, p.166; Body, pp.74, 302-303; Roe, p.139; Pink, Sovereignty, p.182. Pink: "Clearly it was the divine will that sin should enter this world, or it would not have done so" (Gleanings from the Scriptures, p.206). Hoeksema: Sin is not "a mere accident" (Good Pleasure, pp.64, 84). So too Tucker, pp.112-113.

10. Body, pp.74, 105; S & T¹, vol.II, p.166; Cause, p.156; Comm on Lam. 3:38; Philpot, Meditations, vol.III, p.49; Tucker, p.208; Parks, Conversation, p.23. J.C. Ryland, Sr., held that "God wills sin in a different way than he wills that which is good ... He wills it not by His effective will, but by His permissive will" (Contemplations, vol.II, p.384). Pittman: "God's attitude to sin is not compulsive, but permissive" (Questions, p.38). Cf. Calvin, Predestination, pp.176-177; Sarrells, Systematic Theology, pp.109-110; Carson, Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility, p.36.

11. Body, pp.74, 302. Tucker: "if God had not determined its existence, it could not have had being; unless we suppose sin to be greater than God" (p.124). Wilks (p.129) uses these very words but does not acknowledge Tucker.

12. Cause, p.188. Cf. H.A. Long, p.169. Speaking of sin as a 'defect' or privation was not new. It is basically an Augustinian concept. Even Eckhart said that sin is "not an effect, but a defect" (quoted in Von Huelgel, vol.II, p.294). However, Hoeksema stated, "Sin is not a mere negation of being" (Dogmatics, p.247).

final cause of evil. In an effective way God causes good to exist, but it is in a 'defective' way that He causes evil to exist. In both operations God uses second causes. In producing evil God uses the nature of Man. Thus the "obliquity and irregularity" and "ataxy, disorder and iniquity of any action" comes from Man because he is the means.¹³

The following analogy is used by many Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians.¹⁴ A man lets loose of an apple in his hand and the apple falls. The final cause of the fall is the man's permission to let it fall. He allows it to be free from his grasp. But the defective cause of its fall is the law of gravity together with the weight of the apple. If the man threw the apple down in a vacuum where there is no gravity and hence no weight, then the man would be the defective cause. Even in that situation the movement would not be defective per se because there is no gravity, so his throwing it would be the effective cause. Some of those who object to this analogy contend that it is inconsistent with the High and Hyper-Calvinist doctrine of determinism. They say that in the analogy this 'law of gravity' must either be God or something else. If it is God then He is to be blamed for pulling the apple down. If it is not God then it must be some other eternal person or principle as great as God (some say greater because even the man in the analogy is subject to the law of gravity!). If it is something else coexistent with God then there are two Gods or perhaps there is the 'nature and fitness of things' necessity. Thus Gill is forced to admit that God somehow exerts force on Man to Fall. It may be further noted that this apple illustration and some of the above disagreements seem to be based on Newtonian concepts. (Newton was Socinian.)

The question arises: Does God's permissive will then force men to sin against their wills? We previously showed that Gill's transcendent determinism had a matching immanent determinism in Providence. All God's Providences are "executed with power irresistible". "For what is done by men, under the direction and influence of divine providence, is said to be done by the Lord."¹⁵ Gill, however, retreats a bit here and

13. Body, p.302; Cause, p.194. No man is able to say, "I wanted to believe but God did not let me". Arminians sometimes use this situation in relation to the problem of evil in rebuffing Calvinists, but it betrays a basic misunderstanding of the problem and the Calvinist position. See Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.144.

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explains that this does not mean that God "infuses (sin) into men", "nor tempts nor forces to it".¹⁶ When Man sins it is not God sinning through him.¹⁷ When Man does good, this is God doing good through him. God is not guilty of any injustice in permitting Man to sin.¹⁸

All evil is one of two sorts:

1. Malum poenae, the evil of afflictions; whether in a way of chastisement, or of punishment... 2. There is malum culpae, or the evil of fault and blame, that is sin.¹⁹

One would expect Gill to say that the first is caused effectively and the second only defectively by God. However, here we find what might be considered an inconsistency, contradiction or unexplained difficulty. It is this:

it is not only by his permission, but according to his ordination and will, that there are (deceivers) in the world ... so much is there of the permissive and efficacious will of God in this matter.²⁰

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14. E.g., Hassell, History, p.653; Pink, Sovereignty, p.168.

15. Body, p.304; Comm on Ezek. 29:14. Hoeksema: "Though God is never the author of sin in man, yet He does cooperate with him even when he walks in ways of sin and corruption" (IK, vol.III, p.185).

16. Comm on Job 12:16; Body, p.105. Cf. Comm on James 1:13-14, Matt. 6:13. Philpot says that we can thank God for temptations because they test our faith and drive us closer to God (Sermons, vol.III, p.47); and Homer Hoeksema adds that "it is certainly according to Scripture to believe that God sometimes leads into temptation" (Voice, p.656). On why God permits sin in believers, see ibid., p.651-660; Tucker, pp.121-124, 144. There is also the important Reformed maxim that "God is the author of their being, but not the infuser of their sin" (Zanchius, Predestination (S.G.U. edition), p.109; Pink, Sovereignty, p.124. Cf. Wells, Reprobation and Election, p.6).

17. Body, p.74; Philpot, Sermons, vol.II, pp.28-29.

18. Comm on Job 34:10. Note Tucker's reverse teleology on this point: "Whatever was the first cause or occasion of sin, it must be entirely free from the fault or blame; for, if fault or blame was in the cause, sin must be in it, and then this flagrant contradiction must follow, that sin was before it was. But this was impossible. And, therefore, God may be the first cause or occasion of sin, and yet be absolutely free from the fault or blame" (p.123). Hoeksema: "God can never will anything sinfully ... but even when it is His sovereign will and counsel that evil shall exist, His will is always righteous and holy and good" (IK, vol.III, p.542).

19. Body, p.74. Cf. Comm on Job 2:10, 34:10, Isa. 45:10, Amos 3:6. The second of these two evils is also called 'moral evil' in S & T, vol.II, p.166; Comm on Psa. 34:8. Cf. Philpot, Sermons, vol.III, p.75; vol.VIII, p.51.

20. Comm on Job 12:16. Cf. Body, p.302. There has been some difference of opinion among Supralapsarians and Hyper-Calvinists on this point. Some assert that God merely permits evil; He does not ordain it. Others feel that this is not strong enough. Perkins: "God is not only a bare permissive agent in an evil work, but a powerful effecter of the same" (Works, vol.I, p.16).

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Thus permission and ordination are not exclusive. There is some overlap. There is also some overlap in the two kinds of evil. This may have some parallel in his way of differentiating the secret and revealed wills.

It is at this point that Gill debates the notion of whether God acted positively in ordaining moral evil. God either wills or does not will it. If He does not will it, it does not exist; since it exists He must have willed it.²¹ This follows the classic analysis mentioned above, and the logical conclusion might appear to be that He is in some sense the author of sin. Gill surprizes both his followers and opponents by proposing something of an antinomy, viz:

There are two things to be set down for certain and eternal truths, whether we are capable of reconciling them to our own satisfaction and that of others, or no; the one is, that God is not and cannot be the author of sin; the other is, that the providence of God has a concern with and in all sinful actions in some sense or another.²²

It is surprizing that Gill suggests an antinomy because his

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Pink: "God wills to permit sin as is evident, for He does permit it. Surely none will say that God does what He does not will to do"; therefore God does not merely permit evil (Sovereignty, p.301. Cf. p.286; Gleanings from the Scriptures, p.205). Wilks: "As a matter of necessity, God permitted sins, because he first willed it" (p.131). The Hoeksemas deny that God merely permits sin. Nothing, they hold, has any power except from God and to say that evil exists by God's permissive will is dualistic. See Herman Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, pp.78, 418; Good Pleasure, p.65; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.142-143, 241, 651-660. Some writers have defined Supralapsarianism or Modern Antinomianism in terms of God's ordaining and not merely permitting evil (e.g., Wilks, pp.15-16; Parks, A Sunday-School Dictionary, p.49).

21. Body, p.74. Cf. S & T¹, vol.II, p.166; Body, pp.302-303. Roe: "what God permits, God wills to permit ... for, if He did not will to permit it, He would not permit it and it would not come about" (p.139). Pink: "Plainly it was God's will that sin should enter this world, otherwise it would not have entered, for nothing happens save as God has eternally decreed. Moreover, there was more than a bare permission, for God only permits that which He has purposed" (Sovereignty, p.182).

22. Body, pp.301-302. J.C. Ryland, Sr., used nearly the exact same words as these and was probably borrowing from his friend Gill (Contemplations, vol.II, p.383. Cf. vol.III, p.147). The key phrase here is the words 'in some sense'. Tucker used it (p.144), and even Zanchius could affirm that "Augustine, Luther, Bucer, the scholastic divines, and other learned writers are not to be blamed for asserting that 'God may in some sense be said to will the being and commission of sin'" (Predestination, p.54. Also in Toplady, Works, vol.V, p.198). Peter Martyr employed the phrase "after a sort" in the same manner in Common Places, Part II, p.22.

methodology did not often employ antinomies. It must be noted, however, that the above quotation suggests that the relationship between the two principles is incapable of logical reconciliation only to some persons. Gill did not feel himself incapable of reconciling them. He may have felt that he had further light on the problem than others. Many opponents considered his 'further light' explanations to reek strongly of Antinomianism.

What is also surprising is that the above quotation admits that 'in some sense' God is involved in the existence of sin. The context from which this quotation is derived supports this. The context further explains what this 'concern' entails. There is great caution in his explanations.²³ Basically his explanations revert back to the determinism of Providence. First there is the argument of unique divine independency:

to exclude the providence of God from all concern in the sinful actions of men, is contrary to the independency of God ... or they would be in action independent of him, and so there would be other independents besides him.²⁴

Then there is the argument of the universality of Providence in Creation:

moreover to exempt the providence of God from all concern in the sinful actions, or in actions to which sin is annexed, would be to banish providence, in a good measure, out of the world; for, comparatively speaking, what is done in the world but what is sinful?²⁵

Furthermore Gill adds the argument that God could have prevented sin but has not done so:

God, in innumerable instances, does not hinder the commission of sin, when he could do it, if he would: that he can do it is certain, because he has done it.²⁶

23. E.g., Body, p.74; Cause, p.194.

24. Body, p.302.

25. Body, p.302.

26. Body, p.302. So too Tucker, pp.113, 150, 208, and often; and to a certain extent Hoeksema, TK, vol.I, pp.173-189. On restraining grace, see Chapter XI below.

There is also the question of the irresistibility of God's Providence. Since all that is ordained in the decrees is effected irresistibly in Providence, God's permission of evil is 'efficacious', thusly:

God's will is in it, and efficacy attends it ... God is represented [in Scripture] as active in things relative to it.²⁷

The whole discussion continues in this circle, and many Low Calvinists, Arminians and Deists are not satisfied with the solution. To them Gill's explanations still do not do justice to God's holiness. It is at this that Gill plays his trump card. It is his last line of defence. It is an answer given in only one place in his entire writings and has no further explanation attached. It is this:

We, as creatures, are bound to hinder all the evil we can; but God is under no such obligation.²⁸

What Gill does here is retreat to the doctrine of divine sovereignty. In so doing he brings out the 'wholly otherness' of God and denies the anthropomorphic analogy that God must hinder all evil. It is as if to reply, "Who are you, o man, to say that God must hinder all sin to remain holy? If God so chooses to allow evil, that is His divine prerogative". To Arminians and Deists this is an explicit denial of the holiness of God. The argument was put forth in a similar way by earlier Puritan Federalists, especially Supralapsarians like Perkins, and it was against this concept that Wesley's Arminianism stressed the absolute holiness of God with the anthropomorphic corollary that God necessarily intends to hinder all evil.

In effect this solution attempts to solve the problem of evil by redefining divine holiness. The classic definitions in the three-point

27. Body, p.302.

28. Body, p.302. Wells: "By what law (and where there is no law there is no transgression) can it be proved that God was not at liberty to permit the existence of evil?" (Moral Government, p.37). This is particularly significant, coming as it does from Wells. Jonathan Edwards employed this argument in Works (1834 edition), vol.II, pp.108, 137-138. Bellamy, a protege of Edwards and a Low Calvinist, added that as God was under no obligation to stop the first man from sinning, so He has been under no obligation to save any man since the Fall (Works, vol.II, pp.254, 279). Brine said that God was under no obligation to restore ability of will to Man after the Fall, thereby ensuring that Man would remain sinful unless or until God acted in special grace (Vindication, pp.212-213). See also H.A. Long, Calvinism Popularized, p.171; Tucker, pp.124, 144, 207-208.

expression of the problem said that essential to holiness is the absolute and uncompromising intention to prevent evil. Gill agreed with this so far as the revealed will is concerned, but he argued that the definition is incomplete without taking the deterministic secret will into consideration. Alterations needed to be made to take the secret will into account and Gill offered several suggestions.

The secret will is not based on divine prescience, but vice-versa. "God's (prescience) of sin most fully proves his will in it".²⁹ The secret will has one final end, the glory of God, and this end is achieved through several of His attributes by the permission of sin. Gill:

Besides, as Beza, and other divines argue, unless God had voluntarily permitted sin to be, there could be no display, neither of his punitive justice, nor of his mercy.³⁰

God is glorified in His justice in the reprobate by finally punishing them in Hell.³¹ He is glorified in His mercy by the common grace He gave the reprobate in sustaining their existence on earth and giving them time to repent, and in the mercy He gave the elect in saving them from Hell.³² He is glorified in the elect by His justice by punishing Christ in their stead. Of course, this necessitates limited atonement, else the whole pattern breaks down. In each of these instances the existence of sin is necessary to reach the final end of the glory of God in His justice and mercy.³³

As God saves the elect from sin as a manifestation of His saving grace, so He often prevents some sinful acts as a manifestation of His common grace. Sometimes God overrules sin for good³⁴ and sometimes

29. Body, p.74. Cf. Comm on Lam. 3:38; Roe, p.139; Tucker, p.120.

30. Body, p.74. Cf. Tucker, pp.150-191.

31. Comm on Pro. 16:4.

32. Comm on Psa. 5:4.

33. Cause, p.156; Hussey, Glory, p.170; Tucker, pp.112-113; Roe, p.139; Wells, Reprobation and Election, p.14. This is as much as saying that God receives more glory from allowing the existence of evil than He would had He not allowed it. See Tucker, pp.120, 150; John Johnson, The Faith of God's Elect; Brine, Some Mistakes in a Book of Mr. Johnson's of Liverpool. Wilks: "Even sin is but a means in God's hand unto the realization of His eternal purpose" (p.143). Wilks sets up this syllogism: God wills all means to all ends; sin is a means to a good end; therefore God willed sin (p.104).

34. Comm on Isa. 45:7, Lam. 3:38, Psa. 145:17, Job 12:12. See Chapter X below.

"God may will one sin as a punishment for another".³⁵ This would be similar to Gill's doctrine of miracles and double miracles mentioned in the previous chapter. That is, God does not always prevent sin; when He does He acts out of the common way (cf. miracles), and sometimes He allows one unusual sin to be the punishment for another, which again is acting out of the ordinary (cf. double miracles). This is not to say that God always acts miraculously when He prevents or punishes sins. It is not a perfect analogy but there are marked similarities.

With respect to the problem of evil, Gill obviously denied Gnostic dualism.³⁶ The principle of evil is not eternal; it is created by divine permission. It is not personal, though it finds expression in human and angelic personalities. It is not a final cause but a second cause. At this point Gill fulfils our expectations and defends the Stoics from the charge of making God the author of sin.³⁷ He offers little explanation in the context of this defence. His explanation may be found in another context where he denies that "sin itself is a real good".³⁸ Some critics might question this point. Did not the Stoics assert that sin is itself a real good in some sense? If the 'good' is that which God wills and 'evil' that which He does not will, does this not make permitted evil a good because of the permissive will? Does not God will evil 'in some sense'? Gill would add that there is some truth thus far but the difficulty arises in the differences between the secret and revealed wills. God wills (permits) sin in the secret will but does not will (command or permit) it in the revealed will. There is, however, the question of the mixture or overlap of the two wills. Some critics may think that Gill's denial that sin is a real good counters, not defends, Stoicism. To them Gill misunderstands Stoicism. To others both Gill and Stoicism make God the author of evil.

Concerning the Gnostic question Gill denied the dualist principle, but some problems arise. To him evil is not eternal. Only God is eternal. Therefore God is neither evil nor the origin of evil, in that God did not create evil out of Himself. Gill teaches creatio ex nihilo, thus evading

35. Body, p.74.

36. Body, p.334. So too Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, pp.77-78; Believers, pp.80-81. This dualism should not be confused with the Dualism of Low Calvinism (see Chapter IX).

37. Cause, p.193.

38. Comm on Rom. 8:28. So too Hoeksema, Dogmatics, p.247. See Chapter X.

the possibility of an evil God. Nevertheless God created the principle of evil by divine fiat. The question arises: is God's creation separate from God in its essence? Gill says yes, because otherwise there would be pantheism. But he still taught a strong deterministic Providence. Though God is not His creation He still controls it in all its actions. To assert that the creation is beyond God's control would be Deism or some kind of Gnosticism; to assert that God is identified with His creation is pantheism. He attempts to avoid both extremes. The problem is that he defends Stoicism, which was basically pantheistic. Either he did this in ignorance of the pantheistic implications of Stoicism (which is hardly possible - see Chapters II and III above), or else he is guilty of a pantheising tendency himself (which he denies). The problem involves definite Gnostic motifs as well. Note again the quote mentioned above:

moreover to exempt the providence of God from all concern in the sinful actions, or in actions to which sin is annexed, would be to banish providence in a good measure, out of the world; for, comparatively speaking, what is done in the world but what is sinful?³⁹

This is as much as to say that God is not His creation else He would be evil, for His creation is evil. Stoicism tended to identify the Creator with the creation; since creation is evil the Creator is evil to some extent. Gnosticism denied that the creator is evil; creation is evil, but God is not the creation. Gill has affinities with both. He agrees with Gnosticism that God is not in any sense evil, but in the above quotation he asserts that creation is in some sense necessarily evil. The result, or at least the parallel, may be that God is evil in the same sense. This same 'sense' is what he meant by the 'concern' God has in the sinful actions of men, which we investigated in paragraphs above. Of course, Gill does not admit with the Gnostics that all creation is necessarily evil in either an absolute (eternal) or material sense. Evil was not originally necessary to creation; it just so happens that all humans are evil. Adam was not created evil but became evil. So also Christ never sinned and was fully man; but Christ was also God and therefore unique.

The relation of the problem of evil to the Antinomian controversy is obvious. Practical Antinomianism makes light of God's holiness. The

39. Body, p.302.

'Sufferer for Truth' contended that Gill's theory of the problem of evil minimized divine holiness and opened the door for Antinomianism. He claimed that Gill's doctrine of reprobation and the permission of sin in the secret will provided an excuse for sinners on judgement day.⁴⁰ Gill denied this conclusion. Even though God permits sin, He "neither commands it, nor approves of it, nor persuades to it, nor tempts nor forces to it; but all the reverse".⁴¹ Also, "the same decree which permits sin, provides for the punishment of it".⁴² Gill himself never indulged in open and practical Antinomianism, even if, as some critics contend, he opened the door for it by theoretical Antinomianism.

Moral evil is permitted in the secret will but is prohibited in the revealed will. Conversely, natural (afflictive) evil is actively decreed in the secret will and in some situations commanded in the revealed will. For example, God commands the State to punish certain criminal sinners; so also parents must punish their children. This does not nullify the possibility of forgiveness or mercy, but absolute justice is necessary for forgiveness and mercy to have any meaning. But only very little natural evil is commanded. Murder is wrong, even if capital punishment is right.

Incidentally, there is very little parallel of Gill's theory of evil to the actual-virtual motif. There may be some similarity in the active vs. passive willing of sin, but that division of will has already been noted. There is also only one pertinent reference to the anthropomorphic pattern.

Another comment again concerns the Antinomian question. In his discussions of the problem analyzed in these pages, Gill often uses bold language. Note such phrases as "All evil things are the objects of God's will"; "evil is also from him"; and "all those evil things God has determined in his counsels and purposes".⁴³ This reminds us of Crisp's

40. A Sufferer for Truth, p.21. Cf. Fuller, Works, p.338.

41. Body, p.105. Cf. Comm on Psa. 5:4; Body, p.302.

42. Cause, p.194. Hazelton adds that the same God who permitted sin also provided salvation from sin (Sermons, p.91).

43. Body, p.74; Comm on Isa. 45:7, Deut. 32:35. Bold statements can be found in other writers. Homer Hoeksema: "the Scriptures certainly do not exclude sin, including the sin of unbelief, from the sovereign determination and power of God ... sin and evil exist according to God's own decree" (Voice, pp.142-143). Herman Hoeksema: "God is the only determining cause, also when men ...Cont'd:

bold literary style. Crisp often used bold statements for shock value, as it were, to make his point. Unlike Crisp, however, Gill usually gave detailed explanations which shed light on the phrases. His contexts are more systematically arranged than are Crisp's.

This is not to say that Dr. Gill or the other Hyper-Calvinists felt that they had the whole or final answer to the problem of evil. This is by no means the case, as they themselves confess. Styles wrote, "The permission of moral evil is so vast a mystery that all attempts to solve it must be futile".⁴⁴ Even the extreme James Wells admitted that it was a mystery why or how the angels sinned.⁴⁵ Parks felt that the question remains unsolved: "But let them beware of attempting to be wise above what is written. This is a subject we cannot fathom or understand".⁴⁶ Herman Hoeksema stated that men cannot accuse God of sin, nor do we need to solve the problem of evil as such. Rather, as he said, the question is "what does God reveal of Himself with respect to His relation of sin and evil in the world."⁴⁷ Tucker labelled it "a grand paradox".⁴⁸ Roe's feelings bring in the element of Theodicy,⁴⁹ viz:

Cont'd:...

are moral agents, it makes no difference whether for good or for evil" (IK, vol.III, p.20. Cf. p.18). Washington Wilks is the boldest of all: "God does absolutely will, purpose, or decree, the existence of moral evil" (p.84); "God wills and decrees sin" (p.90); "God absolutely decrees or wills into unavoidable existence all moral evil" (p.91); "God decreed, and consequently willed his creatures to sin" (p.98); "the originating cause of all evil, is the will, purpose, or decree of God" (p.102). In addition to these and others quoted previously, see pp.71-72, 87, 103. In his boldness Wilks appeals to Gill (pp.106-107), as well as to Calvin, Beza, Zanchius, Augustine, Leighton, Luther and Edwards (pp.109-120, 135-136). Similar bold statements can be found in Tucker's Predestination, which Wilks used (see note 11 above); but Tucker generally explained his statements in a way that toned down their bluntness. Wells is often bold and blunt, as is Styles, but even they are not as extreme as Wilks when viewed overall on the matter of the existence of evil.

44. Manual, p.58.

45. Reprobation and Election, p.6.

46. Parks, Notes of Sermons, p.11.

47. IK, vol.I, p.79.

48. Predestination, p.120.

49. 'Theodicy' is the vindication of the holiness of God in relationship to the problem of evil (cf. Carson, Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility, pp.160-163). The term does not often occur in Hyper-Calvinist literature. More recent Hypers have occasionally used it (e.g., Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, pp.135-142).

Why did God permit sin, the existent occasion for Calvary, to enter the world? I cannot tell you - no man can. There have been many theories suggested - they are but theories. Facts are what we want. There can be no fact given other than, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'⁵⁰

Even Philpot is cautious here on the question of evil:

That is a question I cannot answer. The origin of evil is a problem hidden from the eyes of man, and is probably unfathomable by human intellect. It is sufficient for us to know that sin is; and it is a blessing ... that we know also there is a cure for it.⁵¹

50. Roe, p.187.

51. Sermons, vol.VIII, p.51. Cf. p.54. For other Hyper-Calvinist admissions of this mystery, see Paul, Bible Truths, p.116; Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, p.258; Hoeksema, Good Pleasure, p.50; and Hazelton, Sermons, p.91.

D. RELATED ISSUES

Before we conclude this section we will mention in brief a few related issues. We need not investigate the doctrine of original sin, for there does not seem to be any discrepancy between the Hyper-Calvinists and the High Calvinists on the subject. A number of writers have contended that this common doctrine, however, differed from the position of Calvin.¹ There may be some truth to the allegation, at least so far as emphasis goes, but it is not within the scope of the present work to investigate the subject. We will investigate in Chapters VIII and X the similar issue of total depravity as it relates to responsibility.

One topic, though, deserves some attention at this juncture because it relates in a special way not only to the doctrine of sin but also to the matter of reprobation. That is the unusual and distinctive teaching of what has come to be known as 'Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit-Predestination'. This heterodox theory has been held by a branch of the Primitive Baptists in the United States who have continued to a small degree into the present century. The Baptist historian Torbert sums up their views:

This strange group was organized by Elder Daniel Parker of Virginia in the 1820's ... He had published in 1826 and 1829 two pamphlets setting forth his peculiar theory of the two seeds in Eve, imparted by God and Satan respectively. This was his explanation of the doctrine that some are pre-determined to be saved and some to be lost. According to his teaching, Christ can reach sinners without the aid of ministers or organizations of any kind.²

Hence, they did not accept the missionary movement nor the doctrine of a free offer. Mainstream Primitive Baptists also reject the free offer doctrine but do not recognize the Two-Seeders. Pittman, himself a noteworthy Primitive Baptist, further describes the Two-Seed doctrine:

Two-seedism is the doctrine that there are two seeds, - one the seed of Christ and the other the seed of the devil, - that the child of God has, from all eternity, been a child of God and comes down into the world and dwells in the flesh, and when the flesh dies the seed goes back to

1. Cf. Fisher, History, p.302; Toon, HC, p.14. For the High Calvinist view, see Cunningham, Reformers, pp.371-394. Holmes Rolston discusses the controversy a little in his works, but a full scale effort investigating the area would be worthwhile.

2. Torbert, A History of the Baptists, p.262.

heaven. It denies the need of the new birth, but advocates the idea of an eternal union with the God-head. Those who are unsaved are claimed to be the seed of the devil from all eternity.³

Elsewhere Pittman says that the doctrine is dualist and comes from the Apocrypha and the Persian Zend-Avesta.⁴ Sarrells feels that the theory comes from Supralapsarianism, which is itself dualist.⁵ If Torbert and Pittman's explanations are correct, then there are definite similarities with mainstream Hyper-Calvinism. Hypers remove the biological implications and assert the need for the new birth. They claim that all men, elect and reprobate, are by nature children of Satan. However, when viewed according to the Supralapsarian scheme, it is very difficult for Hypers to describe the elect as children of the devil or children of wrath, for the elect have never really been under wrath - even in the decrees of God. And, as we shall see later, Hyper-Calvinists have indeed taught a very high doctrine of the elect's eternal union with Christ.

The terminology is specially taken from Genesis 3:15 and thus we should expect similar terminology to crop up in High and Hyper-Calvinist literature. John Skepp spoke of the 'reprobate seed' lineage descended from Cain.⁶ John Owen felt that "the seed of woman died not for the seed of the serpent".⁷ Hoeksema emphasized the difference between the elect and the reprobate as well as between the seed of believers and the seed of unbelievers. This is particularly developed in his Believers and Their Seed.⁸ But none of these or others who have used similar vocabulary have gone to the extremes of the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Baptists.⁹ It is significant that the Two-Seeders were Baptists and did not develop their theory from a doctrine of covenantal family

3. Pittman, Questions, p.96.

4. Questions, p.9.

5. Systematic Theology, p.111. Sarrells, himself a Primitive Baptist, opposed Hyper-Calvinism among other Primitive Baptists. Similarly, he rejected 'Two-Seedism' but taught something not entirely dissimilar with reference to the adult elect who hear the Gospel. See Chapter VIII below.

6. Divine Energy, p.137.

7. Works, vol.X, p.291.

8. See also Dogmatics, pp.259-261; Survey, pp.159-166, 475.

9. See also Bradbury, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.555; James Haldane, The Doctrine of the Atonement, pp.94ff. (Haldane's views are similar to those of Owen's above); Hussey, Glory, pp.584-586; Dell, Works, pp.154, 358, 420-421, 474, 482.

baptism.

If the idea of two seeds in the human race did not receive much attention per se within Hyper-Calvinist theology, the question of infant salvation certainly made up the deficit. Most Hyper-Calvinists have been Baptists; generally they have been Strict, Particular, Gospel Standard or Primitive. Of paedo-baptist Hyper-Calvinists there have been independent nonconformists (Hussey, Huntington, Irons), Anglicans (Hawker, Parks), and Presbyterians (the Hoeksema school). Later we will discuss the debates over baptism in relation to the Covenant, but here it is fitting that we look at the question of infant salvation.

Some Calvinists seem to have followed Augustine in holding that some dying infants are eternally lost.¹⁰ Their damnation is due to original sin. Yet most Calvinists are slow to accept this. Most assert that at least some dying infants are elect. Some theologians say that we cannot know about the destiny of the others or if all infants dying in infancy are elect or not,¹¹ while others seem to associate election in infancy with infant baptism (though without accepting baptismal regeneration).¹² Most have taught that all are saved.¹³ Gill himself wavered here, sometimes holding the former¹⁴ (not knowing) and sometimes the latter¹⁵

10. This may have been the position taken by Owen, Works, vol.X, p.399; Perkins, Works, vol.I, pp.76-77, 105; H.A. Long, pp.106-129.

11. The Westminster Confession (X:3) says that there are some infants who are elect but it does not specify whether this includes all or whether some are reprobate.

12. We have not found a single Hyper-Calvinist teaching anything resembling baptismal regeneration in any form, even among the Anglicans. See Chapter V.

13. E.g., Rippon (Manley, p.99), Spurgeon (Thornton, pp.29-32); Gadsby, Works, vol.II, pp.296-298; Pittman, Questions, pp.48, 52, 64, 90; John Gadsby, Memoir of Gadsby, p.110; Brine, Covenant pp.8-9; Sarrells, Systematic Theology, pp.296-297, 503-504; Styles, Guide, pp.24, 48, 120; Isaiah Birt, Adult Baptism, And the Salvation of All Who Die in Infancy Maintained. Wilks (pp.375-376) and others have argued that since at least some infants are elect, they must be justified; and if justified, then eternally justified before or without faith. See Chapter VI. Note the views of James Wells: "All that die in infancy are saved, but not on the ground of non-responsibility, or any supposed innocence they possess ... none can die in infancy whose name is not in the book of life ... I confess that I have no means of proving that not any of the non-elect can die in infancy" (Moral Government, p.21. Cf. pp.21-23; Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, 1870, pp.541-556).

14. Gill admitted that "it is best to leave it among the secret things that belong to God" (Body, p.341). Cf. Comm on Deut. 29:29, Psa. 22:9; Body, p.188; Cause, p.158; S & T¹, vol.II, p.118. Gill showed that he was at least considering the possibility of infant damnation when he stated that infants are guilty of original sin and therefore deserving of damnation. God would be just if He condemned them on this basis alone. See S & T¹, vol.II, p.118; Cause, p.158. (The same words are used in both passages).

15. E.g., S & T¹, vol.II, p.293; DJ, pp.60-61. Cf. Seymour, p.165.

(all). Generally it is the latter position he takes, and he puts forth several proofs in support of it. Firstly, it is "a judgement of charity" to conclude that they are all elect.¹⁶ Secondly, "since they are capable of principles of corruption, why not of grace?".¹⁷ Thus, they receive the gift of faith via grace apart from the Word of God and conscious assent.¹⁸ Elsewhere Gill seems to teach that infants are incapable of faith and are therefore saved without it.¹⁹ The reason for this is simple: men who are saved are passive in regeneration anyway, and who can be more passive than an infant?²⁰ Thirdly, "such a number as they are, can never be thought to be brought into being in vain, and without some end to be answered; and which, no doubt, is the glory of God".²¹

Some writers have alleged that Hyper-Calvinism advocates 'infant damnation' - that all or some dying infants are reprobate.²² Gross ignorance of the theology concerned is often revealed in such charges, but there is still a degree of truth therein. Take the case of the Hoeksema school. Herman Hoeksema, a staunch paedo-baptist, felt that many but not all baptised children of believers are regenerated in infancy and grow up to manifest this condition. But it is presumptive to assume that all baptized children of believers are regenerated.²³ Our raising of them and particularly the preaching of the Word to them will reveal which children are elect and which ones are not. Therefore, there are implications for the free offer doctrine. That is, we should not evangelize the children of believers assuming that they are lost, nor

16. Body, p.188.

17. Comm on Rom. 10:14. H.A. Long attempted to prove the universal guilt of infants from the doctrine that Christ died for all infants (Calvinism Popularized, pp.22, 60), but he ignores the difficulty of whether Christ died for absolutely all infants or only for elect infants or only for all those infants who die in infancy.

18. Comm on Rom. 10:14. Craig, however, speaks for many: "I believe all those dying in infancy are saved, and saved the very same way as the adult" (Short Articles, p.47). Yet he does not discuss the difficulties of infant faith. See Chapter VII below. Gadsby felt that infants are saved without the Word (Sermons, pp.30-31).

19. S & T, vol.II, p.293; DJ, pp.60-61.

20. Cf. Comm on Matt. 19:14.

21. Body, p.188.

22. See Rice, Predestined for Hell, pp.7, 101; Hawker, Works, vol.IX, p.540.

23. Cf. Believers, pp.146-159; IK, vol.II, p.441; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.267-280. Says Homer Hoeksema: "Consequently, the Arminian must also deny infant baptism" (Voice, p.268). But this is not to say that all who reject infant baptism are Arminians. See Chapter V.

that they are regenerated. At best, we should recognize that they are heirs to a godly heritage with the probability that they are elect.²⁴

Accordingly, Hoeksema necessarily leaves open the possibility of infant damnation. He accepts a doctrine of infant regeneration with ramifications for a developing faith. The corollary is that some infants are not elect, regenerate, or possessors of any degree of faith. And yet he does not carry this to the full conclusions. He is slow to speak about the destiny of all infants: "With objective certainty, therefore, there is nothing more to be said of children who die in their infancy than that the Lord saves His seed out of our seed".²⁵ But it is plain that Hoeksema cannot maintain his paedo-baptist rebuttal of 'presumptive regeneration' without holding that some dying infants are lost.

Little is said by Hyper-Calvinists about an 'age of accountability', a concept which figures prominently in Low Calvinist and Arminian theologies. This may be because they have not stressed the doctrine of responsibility as much as others have, but we cannot say. On the other hand, virtually all Hypers have held that there is no salvation (excepting infants) for those who have never heard the Gospel or for those who have heard it but have not believed.²⁶ But we will investigate this issue later in conjunction with the free offer question.

24. Cf. Dogmatics, pp.661-655; IK, vol.I, p.328; vol.II, pp.434-435, 441-442. See Chapter VIII below.

25. Believers, p.158.

26. Cf. S & T¹, vol.I, p.82; vol.II, p.118.

CHAPTER V

THE COVENANTS

A. ORIGINS OF FEDERALISM

John Gill's theology was Covenantal and can be understood only when viewed as such. He followed in the tradition of Puritan Federalism and departed very little and only on minor points. A few comments are in order before we investigate his teaching.

It has been debated just when Covenant Theology (Federalism) began. Some have named Calvin as a Federalist, but it is unlikely that Calvin can accurately be described as such in the proper sense of the term.¹ Calvin lacked the distinctive and repeated emphasis on the Covenants - especially the Covenant of Works - and differed on several points from the Puritans. Often, John Cocceius (1603-1669) is credited with founding the school, but a more accurate estimate is that no one man was responsible. Certainly there are close parallels with many who wrote long before Cocceius, such as Beza, Perkins and Ames. The definitive marks of Federalism are rarely found before 1600 but occur in abundance thereafter, especially in Dutch and English Puritan Calvinism.² It is clear that the school is a branch of Reformed theology

1. See Holmes Rolston III, John Calvin Versus the Westminster Confession; R.T. Kendall, Calvin and English Calvinism; J.B. Torrance, 'Covenant or Contract?', SJT, vol.23, pp.51-76; Hoeksema, 'The Covenant of Grace in Calvin's Teaching', pp.133-161. Engelsma (p.77) feels that the idea of Covenant was in embryonic form in Calvin's theology.

2. The literature on Puritan Federalism is immense. We recommend the following introductions: Jens Moller, "The Beginning of Puritan Covenant Theology", Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vol.XIV (1963), pp.46-67; John Rohr, "Covenant and Assurance in Early English Puritanism", Church History, vol.34 (1965), pp.195-203. For more extensive studies and bibliographies, see the sets of Brook and Neal. Cf. Kevan, p.111. Probably the fullest, most popular and most accessible example of Federalism is Herman Witsius, The Economy of the Covenants (2 vols.), which greatly influenced Gill. J. Wayne Baker has recently discussed whether Heinrich Bullinger was a Federalist in Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition. Locher sees in Zwingli the beginnings of Federal Theology (Zwingli's Thought: New Perspectives, pp.29, 114, 135, 376). Hoeksema: "This development of and emphasis on the truth of the covenant is not to be traced in the first place to Calvin as its source, and certainly not to Melancthon, but rather to Bullinger and the Swiss theologians" (IK, vol.II, p.504). Alan Sell sees two main strands of Federalism: one is German (going back to Olevianus and Ursinus, culminating in Witsius), the other British (going back to Robert Rollock, William Ames and others, culminating in the

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alone, for it was not espoused by any Lutheran, Anabaptist (at least pre 1640) or other Protestant theologian.

This is not to identify all forms of seventeenth-century Dutch or English Calvinism with Federalism, though it would be accurate to say that all English Federalists of the period were Puritans. The doctrinal zenith of the movement was the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. Among the leading Federalists were Ames, Ball, Rutherford, Twisse, Owen, Manton, and Flavel. It is debated whether Amyraldians or Neonomians could be described as Federalist; their leading lights were Amyraut, Cameron, Daille, Williams and especially Baxter. Leading post-Puritan Federalists include Keach, Witsius and of course Gill. Fuller and Spurgeon could be so described, as well as the nineteenth-century Free Church of Scotland theologians (Cunningham, Crawford, Buchanan, etc.) and those of Princeton Seminary (the Hodges, Warfield, etc.).

High Calvinism is often correctly identified with Federalism, but there is debate over whether the Antinomians or Hyper-Calvinists were Federalists in the proper sense of the word. Leo Solt, for example, differentiates Antinomianism and Federalism.³ A better estimate would be that as Federalism was but one branch (an extreme one at that) of historical Calvinism, so Antinomianism and Hyper-Calvinism were extensions of Federalism. Representatives of these two schools accepted the main distinctives of Federalism and, though they differed on their exposition of a few points, their differences with each other and with mainstream Federalism were relatively minor when compared with non-Federal Calvinism. The differences between all branches of Federalism were mainly ones of emphasis or terminology. Nevertheless these are differences to be noted.

Solt and others⁴ see the source of English Federalism lying in the Deist political theory of the Social Contract. This is putting the cart before the horse, for Federalism certainly preceded Deism, even as

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Westminster Assembly). See Sell, The Great Debate, pp.36-37. Sell and several others take the line that Federalism arose as a reaction against the extremes of Supralapsarianism.

3. Saints in Arms, pp.33, 41, 69.

4. Ibid., p.26; Greaves, p.64, etc.

Cocceius antedated Locke. There are important similarities but it is more likely that Deism borrowed from Federalism than vice-versa. One could hardly say that Deism existed in the early seventeenth-century, except in its predecessors (Socinian), which said little or nothing about the distinctive ideas of the Social Contract. Some may want to see some similarity with the idea of the Commonwealth, but the theological impetus there was more to be found in Calvin's theocratic ideals and in Scottish Presbyterianism.

The main source of the Social Contract was John Locke's Two Treatises on Government (1690), published after the Puritan movement had ended (variously dated 1640, 1662 or 1689). This book later had considerable impact in the Revolutionary movements of the eighteenth-century in America and France. It is interesting to note that High Calvinism has usually tended to support theocratic politics rather than the humanist democracies of Deism. There are some similarities between Federalism's stress on representation and the democratic notion of political representation, though their concepts of election were much different. It has sometimes been said that the American Revolution was the result of the Puritan movement and/or the Great Awakening, but this is far from the case. This Revolution arose almost entirely from Deist circles. If anything, it was a reaction against both Puritanism and monarchism.

If the High Calvinists tended to be theocratic, the Hyper-Calvinists tended to be political separatists. Crisp died before he had much choice about joining Cromwell, though Saltmarsh was one of Cromwell's chaplains for a time. Generally speaking, the Antinomians and Hyper-Calvinists were Independents or Baptists and advocated separation of church and state. This may be due to the influence of separatist Anabaptism but it must be noted that other non-Anglican groups were severely hampered before 1689 and the Act of Toleration. Our point is simply that neither Federalism nor Antinomianism nor Hyper-Calvinism found their origin in the Social Contract theory. That the theory began with Locke's book in 1690 does not explain why Hyper-Calvinism proper began shortly thereafter. To be sure, the main source of Hyper-Calvinism was the Antinomianism of the 1640's, which had its main source in the Federalism of English and Dutch High Calvinism. Locke's book could be published only after 1689. Starting then many things began to happen: the 1689 Confession, the Neonomian controversy,

Hussey's non-offer theology, etc. Federalism existed long before Locke and has continued into the twentieth-century in its various forms.

Of course, not all varieties of Hyper-Calvinism were equally Federalist. There were differences of opinion on several issues, such as baptism, the place of the Incarnation decree in the Covenant of Grace, the factors involved in the Covenant of Works, and so on. The school of Herman Hoeksema is the least Federalist of all, possibly not even Federalist at all.⁵ These differences will be noted as well. But with most of the essentials of Federal Theology the school of Hoeksema is in agreement, and the marginal differences should not be interpreted as meaning that Herman Hoeksema and his followers were not Hyper-Calvinists.

5. Cf. Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, pp.504-507.

B. DEFINITION OF COVENANT

Dr. Gill taught that all of God's dealings with men are through Covenants,¹ the greatest of which was the Covenant of Grace. Before we investigate these Covenants we must first examine how Gill used the very word 'covenant'. It is one of his favourite theological terms and, fortunately, his writings provide us with ample material to ascertain how he defines it.

The word 'covenant' is found many times and in various contexts in both testaments of the Bible. The Hebrew word which accounts for the most occurrences is BERITH. Gill thinks the meaning is to be traced to the root meaning "to select and choose"; hence Biblical covenants are concerned with the doctrine of election.² To a lesser extent it is associated with the root BARA, "to create" in the sense of "to order or dispose of things".³ Also, but less significant, is its association with the root "to cut" and "to eat food".⁴ The first refers to the ancient custom of animal sacrifices in sealing covenants,⁵ and the second has to do with the custom of the sacrificial feast.⁶ (Another related custom was the offering of salt, hence "a covenant of salt"⁷).

The meaning of "to dispose" or "to choose" is also behind the etymology of the word DIATHEKE used in the Greek New Testament, usually translated 'covenant' (sometimes 'testament') in the Authorized Version.⁸ Following seventeenth-century Federalists Gill defined this term according to two meanings: 'contract' and 'testament' (will). Most of this section will deal with these two meanings.

1. Cf. Toon, HC, p.20; Robison, 'Legacy', p.119. On the definition of 'covenant', see Styles, Guide, p.250; Parks, A Sunday-School Dictionary, pp.22-23. Pink's The Divine Covenants is the largest volume on Covenants from the Hyper perspective (see also his Reconciliation, pp.35-55); and he often defined 'covenant': Covenants, pp.7-12; Reconciliation, pp.36, 133; Interpretation, p.75; Paul, p.43; Perseverance, p.64. Other definitions are in Witsius, Economy, vol.I, pp.19-27; Chauncey, Neonomianism, Part II, pp.107-111.

2. Body, p.215. Cf. Palmer, Free Enquiry, pp.207-213, 221-223.

3. Body, pp.214-215.

4. Body, p.215.

5. Cf. Comm on Gen. 15:10, 21:27, Ex. 24:5, Jer. 34:18; Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.84. On covenantal seals, see Pink, Covenants, pp.51-56.

6. Cf. Comm on Gen. 31:46, Ex. 24:5.

7. Comm on II Chron, 13:5. Cf. Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.84.

8. Body, p.215. Cf. Palmer, Free Enquiry, pp.213-223.

The idea of 'contract' is primary with Gill and most Federalists. He used several words as synonyms for covenant in this context: contract,⁹ compact,¹⁰ mutual compact,¹¹ covenant-compact,¹² and agreement.¹³ This constitutes a proper,¹⁴ formal¹⁵ and common (mutual)¹⁶ covenant. Now this is the language of classical Federalism. Gill did not invent the contract motif; it is found in Cocceius,¹⁷ Perkins,¹⁸ and, according to Greaves, even in Zwingli, Bullinger and Tyndale.¹⁹ The Westminster Assembly divines were nearly unanimously Federalist, and so the idea of contract is especially evident in their Standards.

According to Gill, a covenant is bilateral. The contracting parties willingly²⁰ contract to give something to each other²¹ or to do something for each other.²² A covenant, then, is based upon conditions.²³ One

9. E.g., Body, p.313; S & T, vol.II, p.282; Comm on Gen. 3:24. So also Saltmarsh, Free Grace, p.153; Keach, The Display of Glorious Grace, p.15; Engelsma, p.78; Palmer, Saviour and People, p.11; the Sum of Saving Knowledge (I:2); Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.250; Pink, Reconciliation, p.36; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, p.58. Cf. Hoeksema, Dogmatics, p.287.

10. E.g., Body, pp.107, 214, 487, 857; S & T, vol.I, p.311; Trinity, p.65; Comm on Isa. 28:15, Heb. 7:22. So also Keach, Everlasting Covenant, pp.6, 13; Brine, Covenant, pp.18, 34; The Imputation of Christ's Active Obedience, etc., p.20; Philpot, Sonship, pp.51, 89; Meditations, vol.II, p.50; Engelsma, p.78. Some speak of it as a pact (e.g. Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.154). But cf. Hoeksema, Therefore, p.278; Dogmatics, pp.285, 293.

11. E.g., Comm on John 7:30. So too Whitefield, Works, vol.IV, p.72.

12. E.g., Comm on Deut. 32:4; Irons, Jazer, p.57.

13. E.g., Body, pp.107, 214, 857; Trinity, p.65; Comm on Gen. 31:44, Judges 19:2, Job 15:25, Isa. 28:15, Dan. 11:17, Amos 1:9, Gal. 2:9, Heb. 7:22. So also Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.83; Saltmarsh, Free Grace, p.152; Keach, Everlasting Covenant, p.8; Brine, Covenant, p.9; Dell, Works, p.160; Engelsma, p.78; Pink, Reconciliation, p.36. Cf. Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.285-286, 293.

14. Body, pp.215-216, 314. Cf. Saltmarsh, Free Grace, p.125; and Keach, Display, p.29.

15. Body, p.216; Comm on Josh. 24:25, Ex. 19:5, 24:7. So also Brine, Covenant, p.19.

16. So also Saltmarsh (Free Grace, p.152) and Crisp (CAE, vol.I, p.83).

17. Cf. e.g., Seymour, pp.57 etc.

18. Cf. Greaves, The Doctrine of Grace in the Writings of John Bunyan, pp.74ff.

19. Cf. ibid., p.76. See also J.B. Torrance, 'Covenant or Contract?'

20. Body, pp.215, 314.

21. Body, p.107.

22. Comm on Josh. 24:25. So also Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.36, 83; Saltmarsh, p.152; and Brine, Covenant, p.19.

23. Body, p.215. So also Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.36, 83; Saltmarsh, p.125; and Brine, Covenant, p.9. Cf. Heppe, pp.385-386; Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.242.

party stipulates (proposes) and the other restipulates (agrees, accepts).²⁴ If one party does not fulfill his part, the other party is no longer bound to his agreement promise.²⁵ Breaking a covenant is considered heinous by almost all men, so breaking a covenant with God is even worse.²⁶

Gill often speaks of a covenant under the figure of a marriage contract.²⁷ This is true of the Covenant of Works,²⁸ the Mosaic Covenant,²⁹ and the eternal Covenant of Grace.³⁰ However, when he defines a covenant as 'a solemn engagement' he is not specifically referring to betrothal but merely agreement.³¹

The other aspect of covenant is that of testament, will or promise.³² This was the aspect particularly emphasized by Calvin and the Antinomians.³³ (In more recent days it has again been stressed by T.F. and J.B. Torrance, among others.) A covenant is a testament which a man makes in the light of his future death. In it he bequeaths his possessions to a specified individual or group of individuals, usually those related by blood, marriage or adoption. It is a legal will; law is at the foundation of all covenants of all sorts.³⁴ As such it needs to be confirmed³⁵ and witnessed.³⁶ It is based solely upon the promise of the one who does the willing, not upon the beneficiary (and of course,

24. Comm on Ex.19:5; S & T, vol.II, p.282; Body, pp.215-216, and often. Cf. Heppe, p.295; Pink, Reconciliation, p.133. For Hoeksema, see Believers, p.65.

25. So also Crisp (CAE, vol.I, p.83).

26. Comm on Deut. 29:25, Rom. 1:31, and often. Cf. Seymour, p.174.

27. E.g., Comm on Ex. 24:15, Deut. 17:2, Pro. 2:17, Mal. 2:14, Dan. 11:17.

28. Comm on Gen. 3:24. So too Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.112; Huntington, Posthumous Letters, vol.I, p.182.

29. Comm on Lev. 20:5, Jer. 2:1, 31:32, Ezek. 16:8, 16:60, Judges 2:17.

30. Comm on Matt. 22:2, 22:8, 25:1, Hosea 2:19, Rev. 19:7; Body, p.200.

31. Comm on Job 31:1. Gadsby spoke of the Covenant of Grace as a 'solemn engagement', meaning the legal betrothal of the two parties (Works, vol.II, p.255). Cf. Philpot, Sermons, vol.VIII, p.44.

32. See especially Body, pp.241-246; Comm on Heb. 7.

33. Cf. Saltmarsh, p.125; Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.36-37; Solt, pp.33, 41, 69; Greaves, The Doctrine of Grace in the Writings of John Bunyan, p.67.

34. Body, p.242; Comm on Gal. 3:15, Heb. 7:22, 9:16.

35. Comm on Gal. 3:15.

36. Comm on Gal. 3:15, Josh. 24:25.

a man can bequeath only what is his to bequeath, but he is under no compulsion as to ... whom he must leave his belongings). This is a 'covenant of pure promise'³⁷ and as such is both a testimony and an oath.³⁸ There are no conditions whatsoever to which the heir must consent in order to receive the inheritance.³⁹ In divine covenants this is especially true because no mere man can restipulate with God, for all that a man can give to or do for God belongs to God by sovereign right anyway.⁴⁰

Now, the testator is the only one who can break his will but since the testament is finalized and confirmed by his death, the testament remains established and unbreakable. Certainly the heir cannot break or annul it, even if he wanted to.⁴¹ The heir has 'covenant interest' (a favourite Hyper-Calvinist term)⁴² but this does not include the ability or right to refuse the inheritance. He is legally bound to accept it. Moreover, the inheritance is actually his as soon as the testator dies, regardless of whether the heir is aware of either the death of the testator or even that he is the heir. It is his before he accepts it (the ramifications for justification are significant).

The aspect of contract takes precedence over and is the foundation for the testamental aspect. The Covenant of Grace, for example, is a bilateral contract between God the Father and Christ and therefore becomes a unilateral testament to the elect.⁴³ Properly speaking there is no such thing as a bilateral covenant between God and man. Colloquially speaking, the Covenant of Works is somewhat bilateral but is not salvific; the Covenant of Grace alone is salvific and is entirely unilateral between God and man (see sections C and H below).

37. Body, pp.215, 242, 314; Trinity, pp.67-68.

38. Comm on Psa. 132:12, Ezek. 17:19. Cf. Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, pp.217-228.

39. Body, pp.107, 215-216, 242. So also Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.36-37; and Brine, Covenant, pp.8-9.

40. Body, pp.107, 242; S & T, vol.II, p.282; Comm on Gen. 15:17.

41. Comm on Gal. 3:15; Body, p.903.

42. Often found in Gill (e.g. Comm on Job 1:9, 4:6, 9:33, 12:3, 15:8, 16:21, 17:3, 33:24) and Brine (e.g., Covenant, pp.8-9).

43. Body, pp.216, 242, 314; Comm on Heb. 9:16. So also Keach, Display, p.29).

There are some financial overtones in Gill's idea of covenant. He speaks of a covenant as an economy, dispensation, commerce, and "dealings with one another, in which one gives an equivalent in money or goods, for what he receives of another".⁴⁴ (Compare Keach's Covenantal vocabulary: trade, commerce, free trade, traffic and merchandise.⁴⁵) This is clearly the contractual aspect of covenant. Crisp had emphasized the promissory aspect of covenant in economic terms, mainly those of 'deed of gift' (promise, will) and 'bargain and sale' (contract). The former is greater than the latter. For Crisp faith is not a condition of a covenant of salvation, else faith becomes a price or bribe. Salvation is entirely a gift.⁴⁶ Of special note is Crisp's summary: "a deed of gift, is opposed to two things; first, to sale; secondly, to loan".⁴⁷ Gill mainly followed Crisp's position here but never explicitly used either phrase ('deed of gift' or 'bargain and sale'), though of course he regularly spoke of free grace as a gift, etc. As we shall see in Chapter VIII, this has special significance for the offer question. For Hyper-Calvinists, to 'offer' salvation or grace is to put it up for sale, the price being faith. They stringently denied this. Man is bankrupt; faith itself is a gift. Offer theology is rejected in strongest terms as legalistic and Arminian. Covenants cannot be offered. Though there are conditions and proposals in bilateral covenants, salvation through the Covenant of Grace comes unconditionally, unilaterally and therefore without offers to man.

'Surety' is another important economic term in Gill's Federalist vocabulary. A surety is a person who pays a debt for another. For instance, in the Covenant of Grace Christ substitutionally pays the contractual debt for the elect.⁴⁸ This introduces the idea of both substitution and mediation in the establishment of covenants of all

44. Comm on Zech. 11:10, Col. 1:25; Body, p.107. Philpot spoke of the 'economy of grace' in covenantal terms but the phrase has special reference to dispensing grace; hence, the 'dispensation of grace' (Meditations, vol.II, p.58). Note the title of Witsius's important work, The Economy of the Covenants. 'Economy' was the favourite synonym of Atkinson, Faith.

45. Keach, Display, pp.259-263.

46. Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.36-37, 97-98, 192. Huntington was not denying this when he said, "a covenant is a bargain made between two persons" (Gleanings, p.396).

47. Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.192.

48. See Comm on Pro. 6:1, 22:26-27, Heb. 7:22; Body, p.238. Gadsby says that in the Covenant, Christ became Surety and thereby became "accountable for their sins" (Works, vol.I, p.258).

sorts.⁴⁹ Keach represented traditional Puritan Federalism in positing that a covenant is a 'mediatory covenant'.⁵⁰ The eternal Covenant of Grace does not need mediators or ambassadors in the same way that human covenants do, for in it the Father contracted immediately with the Son.⁵¹ On the other hand, the Son was a substitute for the elect and therefore also a representative mediator.

Keach also seemed to anticipate Gill's actual-virtual scheme applied to the covenants. For him there are two kinds of covenants: proper (contractual) and figurative (promissory).⁵² The figurative is representative in nature and brings salvation. The proper deals with the Covenant of Works; the Covenant of Grace is proper only in that it is a contract between the Father and the Son. There is no salvation for man in Federalism if there is no substitutionary aspect of the eternal Covenant. The contract aspect is more basic to the foundation, but the promise (testament) aspect is more pertinent to the application of salvation. It may appear to some that the former is internally oriented, the latter externally oriented.⁵³ There is a degree of truth in this observation. On the whole, the idea of representation is essential to both Puritan and Hyper-Calvinist Federalism.

The word 'covenant' can also mean law, ordinance, precept, or command.⁵⁴ This is a rather rare use of the word but reveals much about Federalist jurisprudence. The conditions of a bilateral covenant (contract) become binding when the party involved agrees to the covenant. A bilateral covenant can also be imposed upon a person. Such is the Covenant of Works, in which God is one party and man is the other. The conditions of this Covenant are laws. In this sense a covenant is a law. The Covenant of Grace, however, is mediatorial and unilateral in relation to men, and therefore it is not a law in the same sense. It is a law in that it is a principle, a word and a promise. The Gospel Standard doctrine is an extension of this in that the Gospel

49. Cf. Comm on Heb. 7:22, Gal. 3:19-20; Trinity, p.24.

50. Keach, Everlasting Covenant, pp.15ff.

51. Cf. Keach, Display, p.24.

52. Ibid., p.29.

53. But cf. Gill: "The distinction of an inward and outward covenant, is an Utopian business, mere jargon and nonsense" (S & T, vol.II, p.432).

54. Body, p.215; cf. p.312.

(which is basically just a description of the Covenant of Grace) is the only 'standard' (law). There is no valid use of the Covenant of Works as a standard any longer (see Chapter X below).

Sometimes the word 'covenant' is equated with 'council' or 'counsel'.⁵⁵ Sometimes these two words are also equated with each other.⁵⁶ This refers to God's 'scheme' in preparing the covenant,⁵⁷ for God always acts according to a plan. In this sense both High and Hyper-Calvinist Federalism is deterministic.

In some contexts the word covenant has diplomatic implications. In a covenant-contract two parties unite in a friendly relationship. Usually they were former enemies. By analogy, a covenant is a league, alliance, confederacy, plan of peace, and alliance for mutual safety.⁵⁸ (Keach also added treaty.⁵⁹) This is similar to the idea of covenant of friendship - a bilateral contract between friends to continue the friendship.⁶⁰

We have already mentioned the theory of parallels between Federalism and the Social Contract theory. There is some truth in the comparison. For example, Gill himself admits that "All civil relations, except the natural relation of parents and children, which arises from the law of nature, are by consent and covenant".⁶¹ He even quotes with approval Hobbes (a Deist!) in showing that civil government is run according to the mutual consent of the government and the governed, which consent constitutes a covenant.⁶² This can further be described as a national covenant. The covenants with Abraham and Moses were

55. E.g., Comm on Deut. 29:29, Job 7:17, 15:8, Gen. 22:8, Ex. 12:5, Psa. 8:4, 20:4, 21:2, Lev. 5:10, 14:3.

56. E.g., Comm on Job 15:8, Isa. 9:6, Pro. 8:24; Body, p.210.

57. Cf. Comm on Isa. 28:29. Stockell: "These decrees are called 'counsel', because they are done most wisely" (Confession, p.10).

58. Comm on Judges 2:3, II Sam. 3:13, 3:20, 5:3, Isa. 28:15, Gen. 14:13, 21:25, Ezek. 23:17, Dan. 9:27, 11:17, 11:23, Obad. 1:7, Job 15:25, Gen. 31:44, Ex. 34:10, Job 12:13, Cf. Keach, Display, p.10. Even Hoeksema spoke of 'covenant' as 'alliance' (e.g., Survey, p.139).

59. Keach, Display, p.23.

60. Cf. Body, p.491; Comm on Gen. 31:44, Isa. 28:15, Amos 1:9, Zech. 9:11, I Sam. 20:8, II Sam. 3:13.

61. Body, p.857.

62. Body, p.984.

national covenants but with specific spiritual ramifications.⁶³ Gill does not use the term 'social contract' per se but he does equate 'national covenant' with 'civil contract'.⁶⁴ He also in one place calls the Abrahamic Covenant a 'constitution'.⁶⁵ So far as the practical implications are concerned, Gill felt that a Christian can ethically hold political office. However, contrary to mainstream Puritan views and perhaps because of his Anabaptist background, he did not encourage Christians to enter politics because perfect civil government will not (and therefore cannot) be achieved until Christ returns to earth and establishes the Millennial reign.⁶⁶

Naturally Gill rejected any form of national covenant that establishes a national church, be it episcopal or presbyterian. This is another difference he had with most Puritans. He accepted church covenants as including a statement of faith, regulations (directory) for church polity, and mutual commitments of the members.⁶⁷ But his emphatic congregational polity rejected the cooperation between the Puritan Independents and Cromwell's Commonwealth. Most Hyper-Calvinists have been congregational (and usually Baptist) rather than either presbyterian or episcopal.⁶⁸

Several lesser covenants are mentioned in Scripture but Gill's description of them does not add much light on his definition of covenant. These include the Covenant of Priesthood with Phineas, the metaphorical Covenant with Death and with the eyes, the Covenant of Salt, and others.⁶⁹ Later in this chapter we will examine his views on

63. S & T, vol.II, pp.28, 431; Body, pp.905, 968; Comm on Luke 2:34.

64. S & T, vol.II, p.431.

65. Comm on Gen. 17:2. Pink spoke of a 'covenant-constitution' (Godhead, p.156). 'Constitution' was a favourite synonym of Bellamy's for 'covenant' (e.g. True Religion, p.248). Some might wish to point out that the United States Constitution was formulated by Deists such as Jefferson and Franklin, who also accepted Locke's concept of the Social Contract.

66. Body, p.985. On the Millennial reign, see Chapter III above. On Church-State relations, see Chapter X below.

67. Gill's church constitution was originally called the 'Solemn Covenant' and was written by Keach in 1697. See Church Record Book for Oct. 8, 1719. Cf. Hussey, Glory, p.693; Dell, Works, p.160; Allen, The Spiritual Magazine, vol.II, pp.233-234.

68. On Gill's congregational polity, see especially Body, pp.858-859.

69. Cf. S & T, vol.II, p.475; Body, p.216; Comm on II Chron 13:5; Popham, Sermons, vol.II, p.84.

the three main covenants of God: of Grace, of Works, and of Circumcision.

Herman Hoeksema disagrees with much of the previous descriptions of the Biblical idea of covenant.⁷⁰ He questions the contract motif.⁷¹ 'Covenant' is not even exclusively the idea of promise, though there are aspects of a covenant which are promises (not, he stresses, the mistaken notion of a conditional promise or well-meant offer).⁷² "For the idea of the covenant is not that of an agreement, pact or alliance: it is a bond of friendship and living fellowship."⁷³ Does Hoeksema's definition differ substantially from that of other Hyper-Calvinists? We do not think so. For one thing, he himself admits that there are aspects of the idea of covenant which include pacts and promises, and in this he agrees with the others. And then the others do not rule out the idea of relationship – note their words about 'covenant of friendship'. And yet there is a sense in which his idea is peculiar.⁷⁴ He differs in some minor particulars from mainstream Hyper-Calvinism in the way that Hypers such as Gill differ with the Antinomians. That difference is mainly one of emphasis and vocabulary, but certain details are significant. Some Reformed theologians feel that this is the same state of affairs with the similarities and differences between the definitions of covenant given by Calvin, High Calvinism and the various threads running through Antinomianism and the different schools of Hyper-Calvinism.

70. See especially his discussions in Believers, pp.58-71; IK, vol.II, pp.504-526.

71. Cf. Believers, p.65; IK, vol.II, p.513.

72. Cf. Believers, p.65.

73. IK, vol.I, p.366. Cf. vol.II, p.518; Believers, pp.62, 65, 72, 74-75.

74. "If you ask me what is the most peculiar treasure of the Protestant Reformed Churches, I answer without any hesitation: their peculiar view of the covenant" (quoted in Gertrude Hoeksema, Therefore, p.316).

C. THE COVENANT OF GRACE

For John Gill, "the grand and principal covenant, is the covenant of grace".¹ He admits that the phrase 'Covenant of Grace' is not explicitly found in Scripture, but he equates it with 'election of grace' and the 'eternal covenant', both of which are New Testament terms. It is strange that in one place he rebukes a certain writer for "a wretched perversion of several passages of scripture, in which no mention is made of the covenant of grace".² Other names are given to this covenant. It is the Covenant of Peace, for in it peace and reconciliation were planned; by it Christ the Peacemaker made peace by His cross; and through it peace is proclaimed in the gospel of peace.³ It is called the Covenant of Life because all blessings of life were secured in it by Christ, the Word of Life.⁴ It is 'the church's covenant' because it is made on the church's behalf by and in Christ.⁵

According to Gill, when it is called the New Covenant this does not mean that it is temporal or was made by Christ on earth. It is new in contrast to the older manifestation made on earth by Moses and because it is eternally new.⁶ There is only one Covenant of Grace. Crisp, however, distinguished two: "... they are two distinguished covenants of grace; they are not one and the same covenant diversely administered, but they are two distinct covenants".⁷

1. Body, p.117. On Gill's teaching on the Covenant of Grace, see especially Body, pp.214-250, 345-377; Seymour, pp.168-171, 179-182. For other Hyperist treatments see: Popham, Sermons, vol.I, pp.241-266; Irons, Jazer, pp.25-31; Pamphlets on the Covenant; Palmer, The Saviour and His People; Hewlett, The Covenant of Grace; Hazelton, Sermons, pp.86-96; Brine, The Covenant of Grace Opened; Gadsby, Works, vol.II, pp.64, 255; Pink, Covenants, pp.13-25; Gleanings in the Scriptures pp.190-200. Hoeksema's views can be found in Dogmatics, pp.285-336; Therefore, pp.277-278; Engelsma's are in Hyper-Calvinism, pp.76-81. Chauncey discusses it in Neonomianism, Part II, pp.107-180; Witsius's treatment is in Economy, vol.I, pp.135-172. For background see Heppe, pp.371-409.

2. Body, p.83. Cf. S & T¹, vol.I, p.358, vol.II, p.438; Comm on Gal. 3:1. Crisp was slow to use the term (cf. CAE, vol.I, p.84), as was Hoeksema.

3. Comm on Num. 25:12, Ezek. 37:26, Mal. 2:5, Job 12:13; S & T², vol.II, p.100; Body, pp.216-217. Also called the Council of Peace (Comm on Psa. 110:4, Pro. 4:7, Amos 3:3, Psa. 20:4, 21:2; S & T¹, vol.I, p.107, 305, 320). So also Brine, Covenant, pp.16-18. Cf. also Comm on Job 15:8, Lev. 5:10, 14:3, Gal. 3:17.

4. Comm on Mal. 2:5; S & T², vol.II, pp.28-29; Body, pp.216-217. Also called the Covenant of Life and Peace (Comm on Gal. 3:17).

5. Comm on Zech. 9:11.

6. Cause, p.116 and often. See Section H below.

7. CAE, vol. I, p.251 (cf. also p.84). Gill's note to CAE here is one of the few times in which he disagrees with Crisp.

This raises the question discussed at length among Puritan Federalists. Is there a difference between the Covenant of Grace and the Covenant of Redemption? Some writers used the latter to describe the Covenant made with Adam after the Fall, while the former was eternal and inter-Trinitarian (sometimes the terms were inverted). Such included Samuel Rutherford, David Dickson, Richard Baxter, Daniel Williams, Robert Traill and, later, Andrew Fuller.⁸ Toon is probably correct in saying that among post-Westminster Puritans the difference was generally employed only by those following Baxter.⁹

On the other side were those identifying the Covenant of Grace with that of Redemption: Isaac Chauncey, Benjamin Keach, Thomas Boston, John Brine, Joseph Hussey, and many others.¹⁰ The Westminster Standards do not explicitly take up the issue, though they speak in detail of the several covenants and seem to teach that there is but one salvific covenant (Confession VII:6; Larger Catechism, questions 31-36; but cf. Sum of Saving Knowledge, II:1-3). Gill rejected the distinction in no uncertain terms.¹¹ At some points Gill combines the two phrases into 'the covenant of grace and redemption'.¹² Again Scripture makes no explicit mention of the phrase 'covenant of redemption' either, but Federalists generally ignore this. To some extent it is a fine point among Federalists themselves and mostly one of the semantics, since they all admit that there was a Covenant of Works made with Adam before the Fall and a manifestation of an eternal covenant to him after the Fall. The question deals with Adam's covenantal salvation and the beginning of God's covenantal dealings with Man in history.

Gill lists what he considers to be the seven main qualities of the Covenant of Grace. It is eternal, free, absolute (unconditional to man), perfect (complete), holy, sure (firm and immovable) and everlasting.¹³

8. Cf. Toon, HC, pp.21-22; PC, p.95; Kirkby, pp.194-195; Seymour, p.168; Traill, Works, vol.I, p.227.

9. Toon, HC, pp.21-22.

10. Toon, PC, p.95; Keach, The Everlasting Covenant; Miller, The New England Mind: Colony to Province, pp.220-221; Brine, Covenant, pp.16-18. Hussey refers to the Covenant of Grace as the 'Redemption-Covenant' (Glory, p.112). Cf. Parks, Five Points, pp.37-38.

11. Body, p.217; S & T¹, vol.II, p.413; Comm on Isa. 63:16. Cf. S & T¹, vol.I, p.358; Seymour, p.168.

12. E.g., Comm on Gal. 3:17.

13. Body, pp.247-250.

This does not include all of its qualities; elsewhere he calls it Trinitarian, faithful, etc. These seven qualities are noted for their contrast with the Covenant of Works.

At times it seems that Gill views the Covenant of Grace in a quasi-Sublapsarian manner. For example, in one place he contends that "the elect of God are considered in the covenant of grace as fallen creatures; and that Christ being a mediator of reconciliation and satisfaction for them, supposes them such".¹⁴ Elsewhere, however, he explains this apparent inconsistency by referring to the nature and order of the decrees. In covenantal election God finds "men, considered as unfallen with respect to the end, and as fallen with respect to the means".¹⁵ The Covenant of Grace, then, is merely a means to an end. It is a means to accomplish God's glory.¹⁶ Occasionally he sounds as if he teaches that the Covenant is also a means to accomplish election ("The basis of the covenant, is God's election of men to eternal life."¹⁷). Election itself is a means - a higher means, as it were - to the highest end of all.

There are some curious observations found in some places in Gill's works describing the relation between the council, counsel and covenant of grace. He speaks of the great council, and the great counsel; the council of peace, and the counsel of peace; the council and covenant of peace; the council and covenant of grace and peace, and the counsel and covenant of grace and peace.¹⁸ The Covenant is called God's privy council, and the Covenant of Peace is explicitly equated with the Council of Peace.¹⁹ In some places Gill seems to equate as synonymns the two homonymns council and counsel.²⁰ The phrase 'counsel of peace'

14. Body, p.230. Cf. S & T², vol.II, pp.100, 168.

15. Comm on Eph. 1:4.

16. S & T², vol.II, p.95. Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.179; vol.II, p.10.

17. Body, p.247. Cf. p.248.

18. Comm on Job 15:8, Psa. 110:4, Pro. 4:7; S & T¹, vol.I, p.305; Comm on Job 15:8, Lev. 5:10, Psa. 20:4, 21:2, Lev. 14:3; S & T², vol.II, p.99; S & T¹, vol.I, p.320. Cf. also Comm on Gen. 22:8, Ex. 12:5. On the divine counsel, see Hussey, Glory, p.156; Philpot, Meditations, vol.III, p.73; Sermons, vol.II, pp.53-68.

19. Comm on Gen. 1:26; Amos 3:3. Cf. Comm on Job 15:8, 15:15 and the 'cabinet-council' of Job 15:8. Cf. Tucker, pp.182-183.

20. Cf. Comm on Pro. 8:14, Job 15:8, Isa. 9:6; Philpot, Sermons, vol.VI, p.56. This could possibly be due to printer's errors but it is unlikely. 'Counsel' sometimes occurs in the plural, referring to divine omniscience, but 'council' rarely is in the plural (e.g., Philpot, Sermons, vol.III, p.19; vol.VI, p.56).

is found in Scripture in Zechariah 6:13 but Gill surprises the reader of his Commentary on that verse by not equating this counsel with the eternal Covenant per se. He feels that the passage refers to the gospel, elsewhere called the whole council²¹ or counsel of God (cf. Acts 20:27). This is really not so strange after all when we remember that Gill thinks that the gospel is merely a transcript of the eternal Covenant of Grace. In sum, the counsel of God is His own wisdom; the council is the inter-Trinitarian meeting; the Covenant is the Trinity's decision and agreement. There appears some chronology in their relation to each other but it is merely another point of logic (apex logicus). As Gill himself describes it,

The council ... is the basis and foundation of the covenant of grace, and both relate to the same thing, and in which the same persons are concerned. In the former, things were contrived, planned and advised; in the latter, fixed and settled.²¹

Great stress is laid on the Trinitarian aspect of this covenant.²² This is not new among Federalists. We see it in the Westminster Larger Catechism (Question 31), the Sum of Saving Knowledge (II:1), the Baptist Confession of 1689 (VII:3), and in innumerable Puritans and Hyper-Calvinists of all ages. Of course, in describing a meeting between the members of the Trinity, anthropomorphic language is used to a large and speculative extent. This lays Gill open to Seymour's charge that his teaching on the subject is "crass ... sounds loudly of tri-theism ... and seems coldly legalistic and mechanical".²³ This is a personal and polemical attack upon Gill; but as we have seen, Gill himself was not above polemics. If he were alive today Gill would probably reply by denouncing Seymour as an Arminian or Socinian. For all his Trinitarianism Gill firmly rejected both tri-theism and Subordinationism (see Section E below).

The Holy Spirit has a place in the Covenant as well. He is the official witness of the Covenant.²⁴ He was consulted in the council and

21. Body, p.214. Cf. S & T¹, vol.II, p.94.

22. Trinity, pp.63-64, 67-68; S & T¹, vol.II, p.59; S & T², vol.II, p.95; Body, pp.214, 217. So too Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.255; Parks, Five Points, p.46; Philpot, Sermons, vol.VI, p.154. Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.154; Styles, Guide, pp.25-27; Cozens, Thought-Book, p.9.

23. Seymour, p.171.

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therefore is called counsellor in Scripture.²⁵ He agreed to sanctify the elect and apply covenantal grace to them in time.²⁶ Nevertheless, the Spirit is in somewhat of a secondary position in the Covenant of Grace. The central place belongs to Christ.

Gill often taught that Christ is "the sum and substance of the covenant" and is the Covenant itself.²⁷ He is the foundation of the Covenant's faithfulness, the surety of the elect in the Covenant, and the ultimate recipient of its blessings. The Covenant, properly speaking, is only between the Father and the Son. Gill repeatedly stresses that this Covenant is in no way between God and Man. No mere man can covenant with God, for all that a man has was given to him by God and so belongs to God anyway by sovereign right; besides, all men are indebted to God as creator.²⁸ This being so, it is even more unthinkable that a man can enter another man into covenant with God on his behalf. Therefore infant baptism is rejected.²⁹ When Scripture speaks of God making a covenant with any man, this must be understood of God's revealing to men His eternal Covenant with Christ.³⁰ The only Covenant that God has made with any man was the Covenant of Works.

In the eternal Covenant the Father proposed certain conditions to the Son, promising certain blessings upon the fulfilment of these conditions. The Father was under no compulsion to give these blessings to anyone but He graciously promised to give them to His son.³¹ This promise

Cont'd:...

24. Cf. especially Body, pp.244-246; Trinity, pp.63-64; Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.255; Hussey, Glory, pp.84, 581, 582, 601. The fullest treatment is vol.II of Philpot's Meditations (especially pp.48-53), entitled Meditations on the Person, Work and Covenant Offices of God the Holy Ghost. Though it is the best Hyper-Calvinist treatment of the Holy Spirit, it pales in comparison with Owen's massive work (Works, vols.III and IV) or Goodwin's. Cf. also Styles, Guide, p.27; Pierce, Holy Spirit, pp.16-27, 44-55; Gospel Standard Article III.

25. S & T¹, vol.I, pp.90, 152.

26. S & T¹, vol.II, p.59; S & T¹, vol.II, p.95; Trinity, pp.63-64.

27. E.g., Song, p.225; Comm on Isa. 42:6, Psa. 2:7; S & T¹, vol.I, pp.129, 176; CAE, vol.I, p.89 note. So also Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.84; Cozens, Thought-Book, pp.44-46.

28. S & T¹, vol.II, p.59; Body, p.214, 904; S & T¹, vol.II, p.92; Trinity, pp.63-64. So also Saltmarsh, Free Grace, p.125, and Brine, Covenant, pp.7ff.

29. S & T¹, vol.II, p.414; Body, p.904. See Section I below.

30. Body, p.904; S & T¹, vol.II, pp.282, 414.

31. S & T¹, vol.I, p.321.

constituted the formal stipulation of the Covenant.³² The Son restipulated and agreed to do certain things.³³ In agreeing, Christ the Word was speaking for His people.³⁴ The Covenant is thereby a mediatory covenant with Christ as mediator, representative, counsellor and interpreter.³⁵ In fiscal terms He is the surety of the elect.³⁶ This is Christ in His office as priest. In His office as prophet He speaks to the elect on behalf of the Father. He is the messenger³⁷ or angel³⁸ of the Covenant and the only way by which one can enjoy the blessings of the Covenant.³⁹

The Covenant of Grace was the marriage contract in which Christ was betrothed to the elect.⁴⁰ The elect were promised and espoused to Christ⁴¹ by the Father.⁴² The 'open marriage-relation' takes place at the conversion of each of the elect, but 'the public and general solemnization of the nuptials' will occur later when all the elect are gathered unto Christ in His personal reign.⁴³

All means and ends of the salvation of the elect were planned and secured in the Covenant of Grace:⁴⁴ including the incarnation, atonement, resurrection and return of Christ.⁴⁵ All the blessings of

32. Body, p.216; Trinity, pp.63-64.

33. Trinity, p.64; Body, pp.216, 242; S & T¹, vol.II, p.92.

34. Comm on Psa. 50:1, Haggai 2:5; S & T¹, vol.II, pp.447-448. Gill often interprets verses in the Psalms typologically to represent the inter-Trinitarian conversation in the Covenant (e.g., Comm on Psa. 2, 40:11, 75:9, 89;110). See Philpot, Meditations, vol.III, p.110.

35. S & T¹, vol.I, pp.525-527; Comm on I John 2:1, Heb. 7:22, Isa. 9:6, 42:6.

36. Cf. especially Comm on Heb. 7:22.

37. Trinity, p.63; Comm on Isa. 42:6.

38. This is one of Gill's favourite terms and may be patterned after Philo's usage. See, for example, Comm on Gen. 16:7, 21:17, 48:16, Ex. 3:2, Judges 2:1, Job 15:8; S & T¹, vol.I, pp.525-527. Gill also equated Michael the Archangel with Christ (Body, pp.263-264; but cf. Comm on Jude 9), while still maintaining the full deity of Christ and denying that Christ was an angel in the sense of being a created being.

39. S & T¹, vol.I, pp.414, 416, 418.

40. Comm on Rev. 19:7, Matt. 22:2, 8, 25:1, Hosea 2:19. So too Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.112; vol.II, pp.35, 255. Hussey describes the details of this Covenant as the "Settlements of the Everlasting Marriage" (Glory, p.171).

41. Body, p.200; Comm on Rev. 19:7.

42. Comm on Matt. 22:2.

43. Comm on Rev. 19:7; Body, p.200. Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.II, pp.196-197.

44. S & T¹, vol.I, p.107.

45. S & T¹, vol.I, p.19.

election were provided: pardon, justification, sanctification, forgiveness, adoption, regeneration, redemption, reconciliation and resurrection.⁴⁶ So also were the means of their enjoyment of these blessings (faith and repentance⁴⁷), but these are blessings themselves and not conditions. Only spiritual, not earthly, blessings were in the Covenant of Grace.⁴⁸ The greatest blessing of all is for God to be their God and them to be His people.⁴⁹

This is the Covenant of Grace. It is so called because its very nature is grace.⁵⁰ In it God promises covenant-grace to Christ and the elect in Him, and this grace is given to them in time in 'a way of covenant-grace' by the Spirit.⁵¹ Gill followed Crisp's statement that "The covenant is nothing but God's love to man",⁵² but in this he was also following the flow of mainstream Puritan Federalism.

It must be noted that Gill felt that the blessings of the Covenant of Grace were freely given in eternity and not purchased in time. Christ's atonement purchased the elect but not their blessings.⁵³ The Covenant planned and necessitated the death of Christ, which together with His perfect obedience constituted the main conditions Christ agreed to in the Covenant.⁵⁴ The Father was under no compulsion to accept Christ's sacrificial death. The only reason why He accepted it was because of His promise and agreement in the Covenant.⁵⁵ The Father proposed the

46. S & T¹, vol.III, p.351; Comm on II Cor. 5:19; S & T¹, vol.I, pp.586-590; S & T², vol.II, p.101; S & T¹, vol.I, p.263.

47. S & T², vol.II, p.101; Song, p.78; CAE, vol.I, p.90 note. Parks: "There is a condition in the covenant; though God fulfills it himself by giving His child both faith and repentance" (Chastisement, p.17).

48. S & T¹, vol.II, p.281. But cf. also Comm on Gen. 9:26.

49. S & T¹, vol.I, pp.107, 576; S & T², vol.II, p.29; Comm on Gen. 9:26. So also Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.85. On this point Saltmarsh added that "We are not his people before he be our God first" (Free Grace, p.127).

50. S & T¹, vol.I, p.107.

51. S & T¹, vol.I, p.266.

52. CAE, vol.I, p.89. Cf. Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.154.

53. CAE, vol.I, p.192 note; S & T¹, vol.I, p.322. But see S & T¹, vol.I, pp.358, 416. So too Philpot, Meditations, vol.III, p.87.

54. S & T¹, vol.I, p.132, 177; Trinity, pp.66-67; Comm on Rom. 6:10. Pink: "The satisfaction of Christ was the one and only 'condition' of the Covenant" (quoted in Murray, Pink, p.126).

55. S & T¹, vol.I, p.528.

death of Christ because of the nature of the Covenant as a testament and will. The blood of Christ ratified, confirmed and sealed the Covenant in time, and all covenant-blessings come to the elect through the blood of Christ,⁵⁶ whether under the old or new administration of the Covenant.⁵⁷

The Covenant is a contract between the Father and the Son but a testament to the elect.⁵⁸ The blessings are freely given to them as an inheritance.⁵⁹ Following Crisp and some of the higher Puritan Federalists (some say also Calvin), Gill emphasized that these blessings are given unconditionally and absolutely.⁶⁰ The only conditions were those fulfilled by Christ.⁶¹ Faith is "a blessing of the covenant of grace and not a condition of it".⁶² Crisp had said that making faith the condition went against the nature of the Covenant as a 'deed of gift' and testament and would be offering God a bribe.⁶³ Gill and Brine contended that faith is not a condition because it can be proven that elect infants receive the blessing of the Covenant, even though they are incapable of faith.⁶⁴ Gill and Brine also agreed with Crisp's contention that "Man is tied to no condition that he must perform, which if he does not perform, the covenant is made void by him".⁶⁵ Consequently, it is unconditional and will never be broken. In another of Gill's favourite axioms, "It is a covenant God will not break, and men cannot".⁶⁶

56. S & T¹, vol.II, p.77; S & T¹, vol.II, p.438; Comm on Psa. 89:39, Heb. 7:22, 13:20, Isa. 42:6.

57. S & T¹, vol.I, p.129. Keach had said that the Covenant was confirmed twice: in the eternal oath and at the Cross (Display, pp.109-111).

58. Comm on Heb. 9:16; Body, p.242.

59. Comm on Heb. 7:22.

60. Comm on Jer. 11:4, Gen. 15:17; S & T¹, vol.I, p.129; S & T¹, vol.III, p.87. Hoeksema's school also felt that the Covenant of Grace is unconditional to man (e.g., Engelsma, p.28; Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, p.512; vol.III, p.21).

61. S & T¹, vol.II, p.59; S & T¹, vol.III, p.121. Flavel had accused the Antinomians of teaching that in the Covenant Christ even repented and believed (Works, vol.III, p.55).

62. CAE, vol.I, p.90 note; Song, p.78. So also Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.36-37, 90, 196; Hussey, Glory, p.117. Cf. Westminster Larger Catechism, Question 32. See Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.242.

63. CAE, vol.I, pp.36-37, 97-98.

64. Body, p.188; Brine, Covenant, pp.8-9. For further on the Hyper-Calvinist doctrine of faith, see Chapter VII below.

65. CAE, vol.I, p.86.

66. S & T¹, vol.II, p.59. Cf. Body, p.903; Comm on Num. 14:34; S & T¹, vol.II, p.281; Hussey, Glory, p.693.

The Covenant is applied to the elect by the Spirit through the Gospel, which is a transcript of the Covenant.⁶⁷ This, too, seems to follow mainstream Puritan Federalism, though the higher aspects of the Covenant were particularly stressed by the Hyper-Calvinists. It was this stress which led them to re-evaluate the nature of evangelism. Obviously they could not call upon men to believe in order to enjoy the blessings of the Covenant, for faith itself is a blessing and a gift of the Covenant. They could, however, recite to them the basic information about the Covenant and leave it to the Spirit to use that information as He deemed best.⁶⁸

Again we mention Hoeksema's disagreement with the position as described. At first it may seem that he disagrees with it, as when he states that the eternal Covenant is not "a certain disagreement between two parties according to which mutual stipulations and conditions must be met".⁶⁹ But it is evident that he is merely sharing the mainstream Hyperist view that the Covenant is unilateral in its relation to men. Similarly, other Hyper-Calvinists would certainly agree with his statement that so far as men are concerned, "In that covenant there are no offers and no conditions".⁷⁰ The school of Hoeksema is not in basic disagreement with Gill's Hyper-Calvinism, but with it shares the disagreement with mainstream Federalism that speaks of 'conditions'.⁷¹

67. Comm on Psa. 50:16; S & T¹, vol.I, p.535; S & T², vol.II, p.100 and often. So also the Practical Use of Saving Knowledge (Introduction), the Baptist Confession of 1689 (VII:3), Brine, (Covenant, p.28; EJ, pp.26-27), and many others. See Chapter VIII, Section 8, note 32.

68. See Chapter VIII below.

69. Believers, p.65. Cf. TK, vol.II, p.513.

70. Believers, p.82.

71. See Engelsma's discussion in Hyper-Calvinism, p.132.

D. ELECTION

The importance of divine election was debated at great length in the seventeenth century, but the debate grew somewhat stagnant in the eighteenth century. Among the higher Calvinists it was often debated whether election was a doctrine essential to Biblical Christianity. Was it as important as the doctrine of God or the atonement? Must a person accept a certain view of election in order to be saved? If so, which doctrine? What is to be made of the views of Low Calvinists and Arminians, and are such proponents to be considered Christians? These were the questions of the day.

George Whitefield was a Calvinist contemporary with Gill. He once wrote to John Wesley, "no one can say that I ever mentioned it [election] in public discourses, whatever my private sentiments may be".¹ Clearly Whitefield was a Moderate Calvinist and always looked upon Wesley as a brother in Christ, even though Wesley was a staunch defender of Arminianism. In the next century Charles Spurgeon, one of Gill's pastoral successors, followed Whitefield's example in holding that the doctrine of election should not be emphasized to non-Christians or to young converts.² Spurgeon, however, did in fact often mention election in his printed sermons. Whitefield published very few sermons, so it is difficult to say how closely he adhered to his statement to Wesley, but the evidence indicates that the doctrine did not figure highly in his preaching.

Gill, on the other hand, was a more prolific writer than Whitefield. A large number of his sermons were published, in addition to numerous tracts, the Body of Divinity, the Cause of God and Truth and the Commentary. In these are to be found hundreds, if not thousands, of references to election. And certainly Gill had no reservations about

1. Whitefield, Letters, p.189; Works, vol.I, p.206. Moreover, Whitefield pleaded, "Let a man go to the grammar school of faith and repentance, before he goes to the university of election and predestination" (Journals, p.491). "I desire, therefore, that they who hold election would not triumph, or make a party on one hand (for I detest any such thing)." He agreed with Wesley that "There are bigots both for predestination and against it" (Works, vol.IV, pp.53-54, 61). Cf. Crow, p.129; D.E. Edwards, p.117. Whitefield, however, altered his views on this conciliatory perspective at times, notably with his controversy with Wesley. See more on Whitefield in Chapter VIII. Hyper-Calvinists regularly stressed election in their preaching. See Body, p.177; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.49; Memoir of Gadsby, p.100.

2. Cf. Thornton, pp.82-83.

preaching on the subject. (Remember that the substance of his Commentary was presented in sermonic exposition.) Unlike both Whitefield and Spurgeon, however, Gill rarely addressed non-Christians.

Gill also disagreed with Whitefield and many of the Puritans on the importance of election. It was not of secondary importance. This is one reason why Gill opposed the Evangelical Awakening and 'offer' evangelism.

In his typically detailed style Gill defined election as follows:

Election, which is a predestination unto life, is an act of the free grace of God, of his sovereign and immutable will, by which from all eternity he has chosen in Christ, out of the common mass of mankind, some men, or a certain number of them, to partake of spiritual blessings here, and happiness hereafter, for the glory of his grace.³

According to Gill, election is taught in both Testaments of Scripture but especially in the New.⁴ Not only some men but some angels were elected, but this is spoken of but a little in Scripture.⁵ Christ is "the head of election to them [angels], yet not the author of redemption of them"⁶ because they never fell. Therefore there was no covenant involved in their election, nor were they consulted in the Covenant of Grace concerning the election of men.⁷

3. S & T¹, vol.III, pp.105-106. On Gill's theology of election, see especially Body, pp.176-191; Cause, pp.78-98, 158-163; S & T¹, vol.II, pp.65-162; S & T², vol.II, pp.381-396; vol.III, pp.1-62, 100-132. Other definitions of election are found in Styles, Manual, p.29; Hawker, Works, vol.VI, pp.217-219; Cozens, A Christmas Box, p.97. Of the enormous number of sermons, works and discussions of election by Hyper-Calvinists only a few can be mentioned: Hussey, Gospel-Feast, pp.97-107; Johnson, The Election of God; Silver, Sovereignty, pp.38-57; Ramsay, A View of the Election of Grace; Stevens, The Pleasure of God in the Salvation of His People; The Words of Truth, pp.37-49; Register, pp.1-22; Wells, Election and Reprobation; Irons, Jazer, pp.18-24; Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.I, pp.325-336; Bradbury, Eight Sermons, pp.57-88; Established Testimony, pp.131-146; Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, pp.189-208; Dogmatics, pp.153-165; God's Eternal Good Pleasure; Homer Hoeksema, Voice; Hanko, Hoeksema and Van Baren, Five Points, pp.27-42; Ophoff, The Doctrine of Sovereign Elective Grace.

4. S & T¹, vol.I, p.129. Wells: "there is neither a book, nor an epistle from Genesis to Revelation, wherein the doctrine of election is not either literally stated, or clearly implied" (Reprobation and Election, pp.42-43). Hanko: "It is the central truth of all the Scriptures" (in Hanko et al, p.41).

5. On the election of angels, see Body, pp.176-177, 192, 304-305; Comm on I Tim. 5:21.

6. S & T¹, vol.I, p.318. Cf. Body, pp.176-177; Gadsby, Works, vol.II, pp.235, 237-238.

7. Body, p.304. Cf. p.269.

As for elect men, election "stands foremost in the blessings of grace, and is the standard rule according to which God proceeds in dispensing the rest".⁸ As such it is the means to the achievement of the other blessings of the Covenant and to the final end of the Covenant – the glory of God. Needless to say, Gill repeatedly rejected the Arminian theory that election is based on prescience. Prescience has to do with divine omniscience, not election or reprobation. Sometimes he uses the terms 'foresight' and 'foreview' (once) as synonyms for prescience,⁹ but rarely does he equate prescience and foreknowledge. Properly speaking, foreknowledge is God's everlasting love to the elect. That is, God "in his eternal mind knew, owned, approved of, loved with an everlasting love".¹⁰ Election is on the basis of divine love. This is what he meant by his recurring phrase, 'the election of grace', and the dictum, 'election presupposes love' (Electio presupponit dilectionem).¹¹

This again raises the question of the eternal ordo salutis. In one place Gill tersely states that "God's love to his own people was antecedent to sin",¹² but this speaks mainly of the eternality of grace in contrast to the temporality of sin. The question, then, is: did God decree to love His people before or after He decreed to allow them to sin? Gill comments:

... it is, indeed, a controversy among divines, whether election is an act of love or mercy; I am inclined to be of the opinion of those who take it to be an act of love, and not mercy ... yet God has in it decreed to shew mercy.¹³

8. S & T¹, vol.II, p.58. So too Philpot, Meditations, vol.III, p.27. When Gill uses the phrase 'standard rule' he is not teaching the Gospel Standard doctrine (see Chapter X). Cf. also S & T¹, vol.I, pp.586-590; Body, p.180.

9. Body, pp.61-64; Comm on Pro. 8:31, Rom. 8:29, 11:2, Acts 2:23, I Peter 1:2, 20.

10. S & T¹, vol.II, p.70. Whitefield: "foreknowledge signifies approbation" (Works, vol.IV, p.70). On foreknowledge, see Huntington, Substance, p.43; Parks, Notes of Sermons, p.61; Bradbury, Established Testimony, pp.115-130; Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, pp.1-12; Pink, Interpretation, p.81. Foreknowledge is determinative (Wilks, pp.150-152; Hoeksema, Good Pleasure, p.229).

11. S & T¹, vol.II, p.301; Body, pp.199, 461, and often. Hazelton: "Election – it is based upon love!" (Sermons, p.198). But compare Perkins: "I deny that to elect is to love, but to ordain and appoint to love" (Works, vol.I, p.108).

12. Comm on Psa. 5:5.

13. Body, p.88. Cf. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.70-71.

Love is irrespective of sin but mercy is given to sinners in misery. If this is so in the temporal enactment, it was so decreed in eternity. Gill then appeals to the necessity of the Supralapsarian scheme to establish election by love (grace). As we noted in a previous chapter, Gill sometimes sounds Sublapsarian. For example, once he says that God chose the elect as foreseen sinners.¹⁴ He seems to recognize the difficulty and he explains it by saying that in election God finds men "considered as unfallen with respect to the end, and as fallen with respect to the means".¹⁵ But Gill fails to see the problem as it really is. If election is based upon love rather than upon mercy, how can it be the election of grace? Does not grace have to do with God's undeserved favour to sinners as sinners? To base election upon God viewing the elect in the decree as unfallen removes the whole idea of grace from election. Gill hedges on this point in his desperate attempt to push everything yet further back into the secret and sovereign decrees of God.

Gill also rejected Whitby's notion that election is not personal or particular but only of churches and nations. For him election is personal and particular¹⁶ but also corporate: "all God's elect were chosen together in Christ, not one before another".¹⁷ He also dismissed Whitby's theory that election is indefinite and concerns merely "being chosen to the enjoyment of the means of grace".¹⁸ Gill viewed election as both actual and definite, not merely as virtual and potential. Election did not occur in a historical time or place but it is still actual because it transpired in the eternal decree of God. Election is nothing more than God electing.¹⁹ It is definite and made certain the enactment and fulfillment of the decree, even though the persons elected did not actually exist. Gill himself relates it to the actual-virtual scheme: "Election gives a being in Christ, a kind of subsistence in him; though not an esse actu, an actual being, yet at least an esse representativum, a representative being".²⁰ Their being was virtual but

14. Comm on Luke 10:33.

15. Comm on Eph. 1:4.

16. S & T¹, vol.I, p.58. Cf. Cause, pp.78-79; Body, pp.179-180. Also: "God does not choose propositions, but persons" (Body, p.182). Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.59; Parks, Five Points, pp.32, 75-76.

17. S & T¹, vol.III, p.29; Body, pp.181-182.

18. Cause, pp.78-79; Body, p.180.

19. Also: "the will of God to elect any is the election of them" (Body, p.201).

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their election was actual. They had their being Federally in Christ. This is the meaning of election in Christ. Gill describes it like this:

... election is made not for Christ, or for the sake of his merits, his blood, righteousness and sacrifice, which have no causal influence on this act, and which purely arises from the love and grace of God; nor merely by him as God equal with the father, though this is true; but in him, as the head and representative of the chosen ones.²¹

Gill, then, denies that men are elected because of what Christ did on earth, for election is purely of free grace. The ultimate relationship with God is not based upon Christ's atoning work but upon the non-historical decrees and attributes of God. Election is eternal, whereas the work of Christ on earth is temporal, and nothing temporal can be the cause of what is eternal. Nor does Gill often elucidate Christ's activity as elector. Nevertheless he does attempt to avoid making election something separate from Christ. Christ is "God's first and chief elect".²² He was not chosen to be Son of God, for He has always been that by His very nature. Instead, Christ was chosen to be servant, mediator and saviour.²³ The election of Him as servant necessitated His Incarnation. In 'this aspect He was elected in His predestined humanity.'²⁴ This decree, therefore, followed the decree to create humanity in general. On this Gill says

... out of the vast number of individuals of human nature God determined to create, there was a certain number which he selected for himself, for his own glory, and to be eternally happy with him; and out of these he singled out one individuum of human nature, to be united to the eternal Word, the second Person in the Trinity ... this the Lord exalted to the grace of union to the Son of God.²⁵

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20. Body, p.199. Cf. p.182. Also "election puts nothing in the person chosen" (S & T¹, vol.II, p.71). The elect were 'virtually' in heaven from all eternity and will be 'personally' (actually) to all eternity (Philpot, Sermons, vol.X, p.46).

21. Comm on Rom. 16:13. Cf. Comm on Hag. 2:23, Eph. 1:4-5, Isa. 65:9; Body, pp.181-182.

22. S & T¹, vol.I, p.129; Comm on Isa. 65:9. Cf. Comm on Hag. 2:23; Body, pp.177, 182; Hussey, Glory, p.546; Popham, Sermons, vol.IV, p.50; Kershaw, Grace Alone, p.128; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.166-167; Pink, Election and Justification, pp.22-34; Stevens, The Words of Truth, pp.42-43. Pink: "Christ was not chosen for us, but for God; we were chosen for Christ to be His bride" (Godhead, p.113).

23. Comm on Luke 23:55. Pink's views indicate how Pre-Existerians employed this doctrine: "The predestination of the Man Christ Jesus unto the grace of divine union and glory was the first of God's decrees" (Godhead, p.156).

24. S & T¹, vol.II, p.11.

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This is spoken only of the election of Christ's human nature and not of His personality. Unfortunately Gill does not speculate on the election of Christ's personality but his Christology considered Christ's personality to be fully divine and antecedent to its union with a human nature. Gill, of course, avoided all forms of Arianism in his debates with Socinianism and also avoided Sabellianism in his doctrine of election. Many of the problems of election are related to the problems of Christology. His middle ground between the extremes placed Christ as the God-Man mediator who, as such, is elected by the Father on behalf of certain men.²⁶ Christ is and was chosen to be the head of the elect; in election this union virtually began, in conversion it is actuated, and it is consummated at Christ's second coming. Christ is the head of all persons by creation and nature but not by election, grace, salvation or union. Since "He was chosen as head to his members"²⁷ there is a unique relation decreed between Him and His people. This mystical union is based upon His election and theirs in His.²⁸ There is a middle stage between the foundation of the relationship (election) and the consummation (union), and that is adoption. Adoption is an immediate and necessary corollary of election, and to understand it we must first take a look at the doctrine of the eternal sonship of Christ.

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25. Comm on Psa. 89:19. Cf. Comm on Ex. 30:1; Body, p.177. Sometimes Gill implies that the election of men preceded that of Christ (as above), but this could not fit into the general tenor of his Supralapsarianism.

26. Comm on Eph. 1:4; Body, p.177.

27. S & T, vol.II, p.320; Body, p.177. Cf. Philpot, Meditations, vol.III, pp.26-27.

28. Body, p.181.

E. ETERNAL SONSHIP

John Gill engaged in the Trinitarian controversy regarding eternal generation because it affected not only the doctrine of God but also the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace. His major work on the subject was his tract entitled Dissertation on Eternal Sonship.¹ In it he mainly attacked Arianism, Subordinationism and Arminian ideas of the Covenant of Grace.

Now Gill considered this doctrine to be of paramount importance particularly because it was the deciding factor in differentiating the Persons of the Trinity.² In other words, there can be no Trinity without Christ's eternal sonship. The eternal three are equal in nature in all respects but not identical. The differences in their persons lie in their relationships with each other and their relationships meet in the Covenant of Grace. In his Trinitarianism Gill follows historical orthodoxy. The Father begets the Son and is not begotten by either Son or Spirit; the Son is begotten by the Father and not by the Spirit, and begets neither Father nor Spirit; the Spirit proceeds as a result of this begetting but is not begotten nor does He beget. This avoids Subordinationism in that Christ is not actually or essentially subordinate to the Father but willingly accepted a subordinate role in the Covenant.³ One wonders whether Gill would have accepted that, as far as the divine nature of the Persons goes, it could just as well have been the Person known as the Father that accepted the subordinate role, but Gill does not go into this nor explain exactly why the roles are as they are. He does, however, suggest that perhaps these roles are as they are because of the nature of the Covenant as a contract and as a testament.⁴

1. This work is found in S & T¹, vol.II, pp.534-565. See also Doctrine of the Trinity; Body, pp.140-160; Rippon, pp.xlii-xlvi; Seymour, pp.86-89; Toon, HC, pp.106-108. For Hoeksema's views, see IK, vol.I, pp.368-386, 575-601. Paul says that some questioned whether Gill actually held to eternal sonship (Historical Sketch, pp.37-38). We find it hard to believe that anyone would question the thoroughly Athanasian doctrine which Gill espoused, but evidently some questioned his Supralapsarian embellishments (see below).

2. Body, pp.140-160; (Anonymous), God in Christ, II, pp.42-58. Philpot said that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be upheld by those who reject eternal sonship (Sonship, pp.72, 93).

3. Body, pp.218-219. Philpot said that some persons rejected the doctrine of eternal sonship because it implied Subordinationism (Sonship, pp.22, 85). Moreover, "As persons in the Trinity they were equal; as covenanting Parties they were equal..." (Meditations, vol.II, p.50).

4. Comm on Pro. 8:24, Psa. 2. Philpot held that the three Divine Persons were three in essence before the Covenant; their titles are based on their essences, not merely their offices, though their offices arise out of their respective essences. See Sonship, pp.39-41.

The difficulties in this position are apparent. Firstly, is Christ the Son of God by role or by nature? Gill contends that He is fully God but cannot conceive of Him as being fully God without also being Son. To Him 'Son of God' and 'God the Son' are identical phrases, without admitting that only the former is found in Scripture (it is implicit in Matt. 28:19). Therefore, since Christ is most definitely the Son of God, He is also God the Son and has always been so. Christ was Son by His very nature.¹ We ask, then, was Christ eternally the Son before the establishing of the Covenant? He replies that it is impossible to speak of such chronology with respect to eternity except in a figurative or logical manner. The Covenant of God is as eternal as God Himself, for the Covenant is nothing else than God Himself covenanting within Himself. Yet Gill does at times speak of chronology in the order of the decrees in an anthropomorphic way. In this point of logic one must ask him how he reconciles his two seemingly contradictory assertions (that the difference between Persons is only relational and that Christ is Son by nature and not by role). Critics asked if the divine persons precede their respective roles and if there is any difference between the roles and natures. Other critics charged that to speak of the differences merely in terms of roles smacks of some sort of modalism; others argued that if the differences were of nature then there were three divine natures and not one. The choice is between modalism/Sabellianism and tri-theism.

Another old question was put forth as well: how can one logically speak of eternal generation? Does this not do injury to the very words 'generate' and 'eternal'? Generation is an act and therefore occurs in time and not in eternity; moreover, there is no real chronology in eternity and therefore no act of generation. These questions were not new but Gill tried to answer them as best as he could. One gets the opinion in reading his explanations that he is trying to defend at all costs both Trinitarianism and Federalism. To Gill each were necessary for the establishment of the other. One could no more be a consistent Trinitarian without being Federalist than one could be Federalist without being Trinitarian. And for Gill both doctrines necessitated the doctrine of eternal sonship.

5. Comm on Luke 23:35. Philpot felt that Christ's deity stands or falls on the doctrine of eternal sonship (Sonship, p.39). Dell seemed to have disagreed (Works, pp.465, 559-560). Cf. Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, p.493.

Thomas Ridgeley was a contemporary of John Gill and was a High Calvinist more or less in the tradition of the Westminster Assembly. Not accepting the Athanasian view of eternal sonship, he preferred to think of Christ's sonship as referring to His role as mediator in the Covenant of Grace. This was not to deny the full deity of Christ, for Ridgeley accepted the full equality and eternity of the Second Person. In fact, to Ridgeley the other theory was the one which subordinated Christ.⁶

Gill rarely refers to Ridgeley but in one place he accuses him of "absurdity and inconfidence" for his rejection of eternal generation.⁷ Gill's own views can be summed up in the axiom, "his office is not the foundation of his sonship, but his sonship is the foundation of his office".⁸ In the Covenant of Grace, "Christ was not chosen to be the Son of God; he was so by nature; but he was chosen to be servant ... to be a mediator".⁹

It might be asked if being a mediator in the Covenant necessitated the Incarnation and, if so, why? Gill says that the Incarnation was ordained in the Covenant but adds that the actual Incarnation occurred in time and not in eternity. This brings us to a very fine point in Reformed theology. Thomas Goodwin wrestled with the question and his Supralapsarian answer opened the door to a theory that has figured much in the history of Hyper-Calvinism.¹⁰ Goodwin placed the Incarnation doctrine high in the order of the decrees. He felt that it was essential for the logical order of the decrees to have some reference to Christ as Mediator, and since the role of Mediator had to do with Christ's humanity there had to be such a decree prominent in the Covenant. But Goodwin did not believe that Christ actually took on humanity in the decree itself.¹¹ Rather, since all of the decrees are definite, all

6. For Ridgeley's treatment of the subject, see his Body of Divinity, vol.I, pp.135-253 and 471-494, especially pp.160-166 and 241-250.

7. S & T, vol.II, p.56.

8. Comm on Psa. 2:7, Heb. 1:5; Trinity, p.166. Cf. Philpot, Sonship, pp.38-43.

9. Comm on Luke 23:35. Cf. Comm on Psa. 2:7; Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, p.497.

10. Goodwin's views are set forth especially in Works, vol.I, pp.65-102; vol.IV, pp.404-569 (especially pp.468-476); vol.V, especially pp.34-67.

11. So Toon, HC, p.77, and others. This means that Goodwin believed that there was the same correlation between this decree and its enactment as those concerning justification and creation. That is, men are virtually justified and created in eternity, but not actually so until time. This differs from the doctrine that the decree to elect is the same as election.

further decrees could proceed on the definiteness of the Incarnation decree. Moreover, the earlier that Christ was placed in the order of the decrees, the greater prominence He receives. Since Christ is said to be pre-eminent above all things (Col.1), the decree concerning Christ as object and not merely subject had to be before those concerning men. Note that this Christ-decree not only preceded the Fall and Creation decrees but also those concerning election and reprobation.

This was going beyond mere Supralapsarianism. We do not find this in, say, Twisse or even the emphatically Christocentric Rutherford, much less Gill. Anne Dutton was a contemporary of Dr. Gill and shared the Goodwin theory. Her writings were widely read by Hyper-Calvinists, and it appears that she was Hyper as well as Supra. Though she had associations with Hussey and Skepp she did not accept the extreme view of Hussey concerning Goodwin's theory.¹² J.L. Garrett, who was a Hyper-Calvinist who opposed Huntington on several issues, also shared an affinity with Goodwin's theory without carrying it further. As he puts it, Christ existed in the 'shape' of a man from the eternal decrees but did not actually exist in the 'nature' of a man until the Incarnation in time.¹³

Goodwin's position has been advocated more recently by Arthur Pink.¹⁴ Pink stressed the pre-eminency of Christ thusly: "The pre-destination of the Man Christ Jesus unto the grace of divine union and glory was the first of God's decrees".¹⁵ There is great mystery in this decree, but it can be explained by analogy:

If faith possesses the power to add reality to what as yet

12. See A Narration of the Wonders of Grace (second edition). "Christ taking our entire nature from everlasting in the Covenant, was the Foundation of his taking it in the Fullness of Time in the Womb of the Virgin" (p.vi). She felt that there are some good persons who have held to the error of Pre-Existerianism who are otherwise sound on the doctrine of the Trinity, but most other Pre-Existerians are not (p.vii). See Greenfield, The First Ripe Fruit, p.12.

13. The Power of An Endless Life, p.22.

14. See especially Godhead, pp.146-157. Other references, in addition to the ones below, include Paul, pp.144-150; Gleanings from the Scriptures, pp.196-197, 200; Atonement, p.111. Pink explicitly mentions Goodwin (Election and Justification, pp.76, 90), and lamented, "That the God-Man subsisted in heaven before the world was a blessed truth which has been lost to the last few generations" (Godhead, p.154).

15. Godhead, p.156. Cf. Letters, p.75.

has no historical actuality; if faith can enjoy in the present that whose existence is yet future, how much more was God able to give the Mediator a covenant subsistence endless ages before He was born. In consequence, Christ was the Son of Man in heaven, secretly before God, before He became the Son of Man openly in this world.¹⁶

Other Hyper-Calvinists did not feel that Goodwin's 'virtuality' went far enough. Joseph Hussey seems to have been the first Calvinist to carry it into the area of 'actuality' with his massive tome, The Glory of Christ Unveiled, Or The Excellency of Christ Vindicated (1706). This rather complicated work still remains the largest work on the subject, though probably the hardest to read. In it Hussey advocated what has come to be known as 'Pre-Existerianism'.¹⁷ The theory has not been very widespread and most of its advocates have been Hyper-Calvinists. In fact, as we shall see, it is no coincidence that the first Hyper-Calvinist was also the first Calvinistic Pre-Existerian. Hussey not only wrote the definitive work on the eternal humanity of Christ (The Glory of Christ Unveiled), but also the definitive treatise against offers of the work of Christ (Operations of Grace).

This unusual theory has found various forms in other theological circles. Some feel that the early Appolinarians accepted it,¹⁸ and it has often been labelled Sabellian.¹⁹ We question the validity of both

16. Godhead, p.155. Furthermore, "the eternal decree of Jehovah gave Christ - as the God-man mediator - a real subsistence before the foundation of the world, and a real subsistence unto the elect in Him" (Union, p.51). Cf. Election and Justification, pp.26, 71, 75, 89-90.

17. On the term 'Pre-Existerian' see Colyer, A Rent at the Foundation, pp.5-6. Some opponents labelled its proponents 'Pre-exist-Arians' (e.g., Silver, Sword of the Spirit, p.37). It has been referred to under other names: 'the Heavenly Manhood theory' (Laws, Andrew Fuller, p.28), 'the Eternal Manhood (or Humanity) Theory', and so on. An extensive bibliography on the theory is given in Colyer, A Rent at the Foundation, p.i; and Reasons for Rejecting the Hypothesis of the Pre-Existence of the Human Soul of the Lord Jesus Christ, p.i. Secondary discussions include the following: Peter Toon, 'The Growth of a Supralapsarian Christology'; HC, pp.44, 76-79; 'Samuel Stockell'; 'Joseph Hussey', pp.226-230; Henry Kendall, 'Dr. Watts's Theory of Christ's Pre-Existent Human Nature', pp.421-452; Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, vol.II, pp.421-428; A.H. Strong, Systematic Theology, p.688; Pope, Compendium, vol.II, pp.195-196; Dorner, Person of Christ, vol.II, Part 2, pp.329-338.

18. So Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, vol.II, p.312.

19. So Hawker, Letter to Stevens, p.4; Works, vol.IX, p.44; Wilks, pp.180, 209, 211, 216, 221, 247, 265, 270-272; Silver, Pre-Eternity, p.iii and often; and others. Gadsby: "Pre-Existerianism is the high road to Sabellianism" (quoted by Grace, Recollections, p.223). Cozens confusedly accused Gill of borrowing ideas from Sabellianism to prove eternal sonship (The Sonship of Christ, p.30) but Gill identified Pre-Existerianism and not eternal sonship with Sabellianism (S & T, vol.II, p.563). Cf. Toon, HC, pp.43-44. In reply to this charge, Pre-Existerians sometimes accuse eternal generationists of Arianism, Subordinationism, or even Tritheism. Philpot placed the orthodox doctrine of eternal sonship between the opposite errors of Sabellianism and ... Cont'd:

suggestions, though there are some distinct parallels. Others seem to feel that it is Gnostic. It was more or less taught by Emmanuel Swedenborg²⁰ (with some unusual variations) and by the eminent hymnist and Nonconformist Isaac Watts,²¹ both contemporaries of Gill but neither were Hyper-Calvinists (Watts was a Low Calvinist). The theory was taught at the same time as Hussey first wrote about it by certain non-Calvinists, who evidently picked it up from Henry More.²² These include Edward Fowler,²³ Robert Fleming,²⁴ and later Francis Gastrell, Thomas Bennett, Thomas Burnett, and one 'Dr. Knight'.²⁵ From within Hyper-Calvinist circles it was advocated by Stockell²⁶ (a disciple of Hussey) and, in a modified form perhaps more approaching Goodwin, Thomas Craner (a friend of Gill).²⁷

The theory had its advocates in the nineteenth century as well. It

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Tritheism (Sonship, p.72). Several have accused Pre-Existerianism of Sabellianism but few have levelled the charge that it is Tritheism or poltheism. One who did was Burch, Remarks on Mr. Allen's Notion of the Man-Jesus, p.20.

20. Hodge, Systematic Theology, vol.II, pp.421-423; Pope, Compendium, vol.II, p.195; Dorner, Person of Christ, vol.II, Part 2, pp.333-338; Schaff, Christ and Christianity, p.114.

21. See Works, vol.Vi, pp.545-594, 723-861. Watts acknowledged Hussey's Glory (p.854), and admits that his views went beyond those of Goodwin (p.573). At times he mentions Flavel (pp.689-694), but the evidence does not suggest that Flavel went as far as Goodwin. While noting similarities between his theory and Subordinationism (p.805), he denied that he was either Arian or Sabellian (p.593). Gill had considered Watt's views to be Sabellian (S & T, vol.II, p.563). On Watts, see Henry Kendall, 'Dr. Watts's Theory of Christ's Pre-Existent Human Nature'; and the secondary sources mentioned above.

22. The Mystery of Godliness (1660). At one time holding to Calvinist views of a sort, More was an important Cambridge Platonist (cf. his works defending the immortality of the soul), indicating the Platonist origins of the doctrine. He was also an authority on the Zohar and Boehme and was probably the first Pre-Existerian.

23. A Discourse on the Descent of the Man Christ Jesus (1706).

24. Christology (in three volumes) (1705-08). Fleming had a controversy with Daniel Whitby and wrote a work on the Song of Solomon which Gill used. More importantly, he wrote of the fall of the papal Antichrist in the same prophetic way in which Gill did, including date-setting.

25. We have not been able to identify this 'Dr. Knight' as yet. He is listed with the others in Henry Kendall, pp.424-425; Dorner, p.329; Stevens, A Scriptural Display, pp.182, 191.

26. The Redeemer's Glory Unveiled, Or The Excellency of Christ Vindicated (1733). Note the close similarity of this title to that of Hussey's. Actually, several works on the theory share similar titles. It is probable that Hussey got the inspiration for the title from Crisp's Christ Alone Exalted. Hussey was greatly influenced by Crisp, but there is no evidence that Crisp ever imbibed Pre-Existerianism.

27. See A Testimony to the Truth As It Is In Jesus, pp.4-5.

is not certain whether Huntington's rejection of it was maintained throughout his ministry,²⁸ but a number of his followers came to accept or reject it. Samuel Eyre Pierce expressed Pre-Existerian views in a moderate but distinct form,²⁹ and the position was taken by Thomas Blonfield,³⁰ James A. Babb,³¹ John Mortlock Daniell,³² and Andrew John Jones.³³ At the same time, like views were being expressed by certain writers within Darbyite Brethrenism, but none of them were noted for their Calvinism.³⁴

The main advocates within Hyper-Calvinism have been those associated with the school of John Stevens. John Allen³⁵ may have been the first actually to publish on the subject, but William Palmer³⁶ wrote

28. See Huntington's treatment of Sabellianism in Works, vol.XII, pp.1-144.

29. Christ the Priest and Sacrifice of His People; An Essay Towards An Unfolding the Glory of Christ in His Person, Love and Salvation; Sermons Doctrinal, vol.II, pp.55-82, 123, 401; Miscellanies, pp.1-18. Pierce was a favourite writer of Pink's, and though Pink does not specifically appeal to him in this context (to our knowledge), it may safely be assumed that he was an influence.

30. Truth Vindicated in Reply to W.H. Colyer (1835).

31. Babb published an abridgement of Hussey's Glory under the title of The Glory of Christ and the Church (1844). He also edited S.E. Pierce's Christ the Priest and Sacrifice of His People (1848).

32. Pneumanthropos; or, The Soul-The Man, in Opposition to the Tenets of Rev. W.H. Colyer, And Frederick Silver, Esq. (1835).

33. Two works were written early in his ministry: Unwelcome Discoveries. A First Letter Addressed to Mr. W.H. Colyer (Brentford, 1835); and Unwelcome Discoveries and Sad Mistakes of W.H. Colyer (London, 1835). Another short work was written much later: A Scriptural View of The Sonship of Christ. A Letter Addressed to the Editor of The Gospel Standard (London, 1866). Andrews seemed more intent on disagreeing with eternal sonship than on defending Pre-Existerianism.

34. F.F. Bruce, a member of the non-Darbyite (Open as opposed to Closed) Brethren, comments: "Similar developments have from time to time disturbed the Darbyite (Exclusive) wing of the Brethren movement, such as (last century) the 'heavenly humanity' views of C.H. Macintosh and others (cf. S.P. Tregelles, Five Letters o the Editor of 'The Record' on Recent Denials of Our Lord's Victorious Life (London, 1864), pp.21, 27ff.) and the Apollinarianism of F.E. Raven (cf. N. Noel, The History of the Brethren (Denver, Colo., 1936), pp.499ff.) and (this century) the denial of our Lord's Eternal Sonship by James Taylor, Senior (cf. N. Noel, op. cit., pp.600ff.)" (footnote to Toon, 'Supralapsarian Christology', pp.28-29).

35. Allen produced three works on the subject: The Crown of Crowns; A Chain of Truths; and The Gospel Standard. The title of the last is most curious because Allen did not accept the Gospel Standard doctrine as advocated by Gadsby and Philpot. It is probable that he wrote this piece before Gadsby used the phrase in its distinctive fashion. Occasional references to Pre-Existerianism can be found in his other works, such as his typological interpretations in A Spiritual Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments

36. Palmer exchanged a number of letters, tracts and short treatises with his critics, mainly with Philpot. Note the following seven: A Plain Statement; A Letter to Mr. Philpot on Eternal Generation; The Reviewer Reviewed; The Reviewer Reviewed Again; Tekel; Eternal Generation; The Supremacy of Christ. A few references in his important Free Enquiry can be noted (e.g., p.309).

several pieces as well and it is likely that John Foreman also held the view.³⁷ But it was the controversial John Stevens who produced the most in defence of the theory.³⁸ Pre-Existerianism and the Gospel Standard doctrine were the two main issues which divided the Stevens school from that of the Gadsby-Philpot branch of Hyper-Calvinism.³⁹

The theory has always remained a minority view within Hyper-Calvinism and most of the leaders opposed it. Gill felt so strongly about eternal sonship that he inserted the following excerpt against Pre-Existerianism into his Declaration of Faith, which summed up the orthodox position:

his human soul being a creature existed not from eternity, but was created and formed in his body by him that forms the spirit of man within him, when that was conceived in the womb of the virgin; and so his human nature consists of a true body and a reasonable soul; both which, together and at once the Son of God assumed into union with his divine person, when made of a woman, and not before...⁴⁰

The extreme position was also rejected by Brine, Beart, Burch and others in the eighteenth century,⁴¹ but the controversy picked up considerably in the early nineteenth century when many tracts and books were exchanged, mostly with the Stevens school. Robert Hawker⁴²

37. There was a pseudonymous ('Amor Veritatis') work written evidently from the Stevens camp entitled To Frederick Silver, Esq. (1834). Palmer and Stevens were prolific writers and not particularly known for anonymity; besides, there should be no reason why they should have wished to remain anonymous. It may have been the work of Foreman, who published very little, or possibly a non-Stevenite. It is much too personal and scathing - even to the point of vile polemics - for S.E. Pierce and it does not read like any of the others, except J.A. Jones in a few places. In the end it may have been by none of the above.

38. See the following six, which either explain and defend Pre-Existerianism or oppose eternal sonship: Celestial Filiation: Being a Vindication of the Pre-Existence of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 parts); A Scriptural Display of the Triune God, and the Early Existence of Jesus' Human Soul (in which Stevens relies heavily upon Gill's Commentary); Recollections ; Verses on the Sonship and Pre-Existence of Jesus Christ; The Sinlessness of Jesus; The Words of Truth, pp.23-31.

39. For information on Stevens's controversy with the Gospel Standard Baptists over Pre-Existerianism, see Stevens's Memoir, pp.34-40, 48-50, 67-68, 74-81.

40. Article V. The entirety of Gill's Declaration is given in an appendix below.

41. Beart, Truth Defended, Part II, pp.xi-xvi; Burch, Remarks on Mr. Allen's Notion of the Man-Jesus.

42. Works, vol.I, pp.1-192; vol.III, pp.563, 631; A Letter to the Rev. John Stevens ... on the Subject of the Pre-Existence of the Human Soul of Christ; A Second Letter ... on the Subject of the Pre-Existence of the Human Soul of Christ.

and Washington Wilks⁴³ strenuously attacked it, as did Tucker and a number of lesser figures.⁴⁴ Even the extreme James Wells felt the need to oppose it.⁴⁵ Samuel Cozens rejected it but also disagreed with some of the other parties, and his position is somewhat unusual.⁴⁶ Frederick Silver, Esq., was one of the active antagonists of the theory and wrote several pieces against it.⁴⁷ W.H. Colyer was another major opponent and his energetic efforts incurred equally fierce replies.⁴⁸ Perhaps the most vigorous critic, however, was Vigors M'Culla,⁴⁹ who had some associations with the school of Huntington.

The Gospel Standard branch of Hyperism was not quiet on the matter. William Gadsby called it "that blasphemous error" and contended that it led to Unitarianism.⁵⁰ J.C. Philpot in particular felt the need to take up the cudgels and answered the threat by a series of publications and articles.⁵¹ As a matter of history, he wrote in defence of eternal

43. See Wilks, pp.163-282. To a certain extent Wilks was intent on defending Hawker, whom he considers his superior.

44. Edmund Greenfield, The First Ripe Fruit; and others. There were other Christological controversies going on at this time, notably concerning Edward Irving. According to Stevens, Irving considered Pre-Existerianism to be Marcionistic (The Sinlessness of Jesus, p.100).

45. A Sermon: Being a Protest Against the Doctrine of the Preexistence of the Human Soul of Christ. This is not to say that Wells accepted eternal sonship. His views more or less coincide with those of Ridgeley. Hence, this was another source of bitter disagreement with Philpot. Styles also seems to have followed Ridgeley rather than Gill.

46. The Sonship of Christ.

47. Silver's The Sword of the Spirit (1835) is probably the largest (566 pages) and best documented work on the subject. Another work was very polemical, The Pre-Eternity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Denied and Opposed by Human Pre-Existerians (1837). He also wrote three lesser works: Immanuel (1833); The Saint's Conformity to the Image of the Son: By Comparing Spiritual Things with Spiritual, As Proverbs viii. 23, With God's Election (1835); and Spiritual Meditations upon the Names and Titles of Jehovah, and His Work of Creation (1855).

48. Colyer authored three works relevant to the controversy: Five Questions to the Five County Ministers who Signed 'The Friendly Address to Mr. John Stevens, of London' (1835); Reasons for Rejecting the Hypothesis of the Pre-Existence of the Human Soul of the Lord Jesus Christ (1835); and A Rent at the Foundation, or, The Babel-Building of Modern Pre-Existerianism (1836). Colyer's works teem with quotations from Hussey, Stockell, Watts and especially Stevens, but Goodwin is conspicuous by his absence.

49. The Candles of the Lord; and Adam's Primeval State Proved Spiritual, and the Pre-Existence of the Man Christ Denied.

50. Works, vol.II, pp.22-23.

51. See Reviews, vol.I, pp.482-502; vol.II, pp.208-248, 306-374, 398-411. Philpot's controversy was mainly with Palmer and Jones.

sonship what has remained one of the clearest and most convincing treatises, The True, Proper, and Eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God (1861). Philpot considered the doctrine of eternal sonship to be of the utmost essence of the fundamental Gospel.⁵² It is no surprise, then, that he condemned Pre-Existerianism in strong terms. (For instance, he called it "that vain figment, that idle tale, that pestilential and dangerous error".⁵³) Naturally, the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith held to eternal sonship against Pre-Existerianism,⁵⁴ and the history of the denomination has been one of the continual controversy on the matter.⁵⁵

Stevens did not accept the doctrine of eternal sonship but neither did he consider Pre-Existerianism to be of the essence of the Gospel.⁵⁶ Hence, the Pre-Existerians were not as vehement in their treatises. One of their main arguments is that the doctrine of eternal sonship just does not make logical sense. "A begotten God", wrote Stevens "is a great absurdity, as is the notion of an unoriginated creature."⁵⁷ Palmer argued like this:

It is contradictory in itself. Because, 1. That which is absolutely simple is inseparable and therefore incommunicable. 2. That which is incommunicable cannot generate. 3. That which is generated must have a beginning. 4. That which has a beginning cannot be eternal. Eternal generation, therefore, is a self-contradiction; and, by a further inference, its own refutation.⁵⁸

52. Sonship, pp.16-18, 22-23, 38, 55, 61, 72-73; Reviews, vol.II. pp.208-213. So too Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.202; Roe, p.157; Grace, Recollections, p.278; Engelsma, p.61. On the content of the fundamental Gospel according to Hyper-Calvinism, see Chapter VIII, Section B. One is reminded of the Athanasian Creed's statement that the orthodox doctrine of the person of Christ (eternal generation) is so basic that he who does not believe it cannot be saved.

53. Meditations, vol.I, p.12. See also Sonship, pp.23, 48, 50, 64; Sermons, vol.II, p.120.

54. Article V. See the entire Articles in our appendix. There is a striking similarity between this Article and the one in Gill's Declaration.

55. Cf. S.F. Paul, Historical Sketch of the Gospel Standard Baptists, pp.24-78.

56. The Sinlessness of Jesus, p.93. So too Watts, Works, vol.VI, p.337.

57. Recollections, p.10.

58. Eternal Generation, p.4. Moreover, "What is self-existent is necessary" (p.10), but the generation of Christ is not self-existent because it receives from the Father. Since it is not necessary, it is not eternal.

It must be pointed out that the Hyper-Calvinist Pre-Existerians were not questioning the deity of Christ. They firmly believed in the eternal and full deity of Christ, but questioned the accepted understandings of the terms 'God the Son' and 'Son of God'. Stevens admitted that there were some Pre-Existerians who did in fact deny the deity of Christ, but these were not of the same variety as Hussey, Allen, Stockell and so on.⁵⁹ The truth is, said the Pre-Existerians, Christ's sonship refers to His humanity and not His deity.⁶⁰ The title 'Son of God' refers to "his humanity and covenant character";⁶¹ that is, the complexity of the union of the two natures.⁶² Philpot, of course, denied this. To him, Christ's sonship is not at all concerned with His humanity but with His deity.⁶³

It was essential to the Covenant of Grace that the Mediator have a human nature,⁶⁴ so the decree of the Incarnation had to provide something for eternity and not just for time. Hussey referred to Christ in this regard as 'the Covenant-Man'.⁶⁵ For Christ truly to represent the elect He had to share their humanity. But it goes back further than this. Christ is pre-eminent in all things, and that includes election. This means that Christ's election preceded the election of men in the order of the decrees and this refers to His humanity. As Allen put it, "Christ as to his human nature, was the object of electing love".⁶⁶ Christ was elected in His humanity as well as in His deity, though some felt that Christ was elected only in His humanity.

The Hyper-Calvinist variety of Pre-Existerianism relies heavily upon Supralapsarianism and the emphasis on the immanent acts of God. For example, Stevens felt that Christ's human sonship was founded in the

59. Celestial Filiation, Part I, p.6. See Amor Veritatis, To Frederick Silver, Esq., p.4.

60. Cf. Greenfield, The First Ripe Fruit.

61. Stevens, A Scriptural Display, p.211.

62. Stevens, The Sinlessness of Jesus, p.13. But "the human nature of Christ never did, nor ever could, possibly exist apart from the divine" (p.49).

63. Sonship, p.26.

64. Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, pp.54-59. Against this were Hawker, A Letter, p.20; Colyer, A Rent in the Foundation, pp.9, 37; Wilks, pp.202-212. Watts accepted this view without some of the Supralapsarian implications (Works, vol.VI, p.689). Cf. Craner, Testimony, pp.4-5.

65. E.g., Glory, p.161. Cf. Toon, HC, pp.43, 78.

66. The Spiritual Magazine, vol.II, p.42.

immanent as well as in the transient act of God.⁶⁷ This follows the Hyperist tendency to push back into eternity as much from time as possible. As most Hypers place more emphasis on eternal justification than on justification by faith, so the Pre-Existerians stress Christ's taking a human soul in the eternal Covenant more than His assuming a human body in time. This is not to reject the doctrine of the virgin birth, but in that event a human being was involved (Mary). This points to the Hyper-Calvinist tendency to remove all saving acts from connection with Mankind. There is also a connection with the doctrine of limited atonement. Hussey seems to have felt that by placing Christ's act of taking a soul into eternity, Christ had less union with Mankind in general. The Incarnation decree is placed before that of election and Creation. There is also some connection with the teaching that Christ suffered only in His human nature, not in the divine.

The actual-virtual motif appears in the controversy as well. Gill followed Goodwin in asserting it. Christ only virtually existed as Man in the Covenant:

it was not necessary, in order to Christ's being the Mediator, Head, and Representative of the elect in eternity, that he should be then actually man, only that he should certainly be so in time: besides, there was a federal union of the human nature to the Son of God from eternity, or the human nature had a covenant subsistence in the second person from everlasting. Nor was the real existence of the persons elect necessary to their real union to Christ, only that they should certainly exist.⁶⁸

Hussey carried this virtual state into the realm of actuality by affirming that Christ actually took on a human soul in eternity. But neither Hussey nor any of the others taught that the elect actually took on human souls in eternity.⁶⁹

67. Celestial Filiation, Part I, p.4. S.E. Pierce proved Pre-Existerianism by appealing to the Supralapsarian dictum, "that which is first in intention is last in execution" (Sermons Doctrinal, vol.II, p.401).

68. S & T¹, vol.II, p.98 (Emphasis mine). Cf. Philalethes, Antiquity, pp.24-25. Dorner said that Watts taught that "The soul of Christ was 'actually', and not merely 'virtually' the first-born of Creation" (op. cit., p.330). Pink exemplifies Goodwin's position: "the eternal decree of Jehovah gave Christ - as the God-Man Mediator - a real subsistence before Him before the foundation of the world, and a real subsistence unto the elect in Him" (Union, p.51). The contrast is between subsistence (which is virtual) and existence (actual).

69. Wilks, pp.262-263, 274-281. Stockell: "we did virtually exist from all eternity" (Confession, p.16). See Section G below.

Because of the difficulty in understanding the nature of eternity and the logical order of the decrees, there is disagreement among Pre-Existerians as to 'when' Christ assumed a human soul or what was its relation to the other decrees. Some felt that Christ has always been human: "his human nature always existed in union to the divine" (Allen),⁷⁰ but this may be another way of saying that His humanity never had a separate existence. Most felt that Christ took on a human soul at the beginning of the decrees, immediately after the decree that all things will glorify God. Some delayed this decree until after the decree of election; a few would place it as late as the decree to allow sin. Still others bring it to the point where time first began, others to soon after time began.⁷¹

In any event, Christ certainly had assumed a human soul before the Creation of Adam, for Adam was created in the image of Christ's human soul. This is seen as a plain proof of Pre-Existerianism and it has often been employed.⁷² This goes beyond the position of Goodwin, Garrett and Pink that Adam was created in the image of the 'shape' or 'subsistence' of Christ.⁷³ Critics replied that this 'makes Christ 'the first man' and Adam 'the second man', contrary to I Cor. 15 and Rom. 5.'⁷⁴ Furthermore, "it would have us believe that God made man in the image of man", wrote Cozens, and "it makes Christ first a creature, and then a Creator".⁷⁵ Cozens summed up his rejection: "I no more believe that Christ is the First Man, than I believe He is a second God".⁷⁶

Related to the above was the argument for the sinlessness of Christ. Stevens explained:

He was the intellectual God-Man before Adam existed; and therefore could not be affected by Adam's disobedience. Sin

70. The Spiritual Magazine, vol.II, p.46.

71. Cf. Wilks, p.36; Colyer, A Rent at the Foundation, pp.25-30.

72. E.g., Stevens, Help, vol.I, pp.137-150; Scriptural Display, p.173; Watts, Works, vol.VI, p.732; Hussey, Glory, pp.103, 163, 174-175, 178, 182.

73. Garrett, The Power of an Endless Life, p.22; Pink, Godhead, p.157.

74. Wilks, p.284. See further, pp.176-189, 221, 285.

75. A Christmas Box, p.177.

76. A Christmas Box, p.173. For other refutations of the Adamic argument, see Silver, Pre-Eternity, pp.52-54; Saint's Conformity.

evidently has descended from the parents to the children; but it cannot ascend from the children to the parents ... Now, if Adam did not come into existence until after the Lord Christ, he could not contaminate him.⁷⁷

This raises the hypothetical question of whether Christ would have become human even if it had not been decreed that Adam would sin or even be created. It does not receive much attention from the Pre-Existerians; but Pink implies that, yes, Christ would have become Man because the Incarnation decree preceded that of the decrees of election and Creation. Moreover, the ultimate decree is the glory of God and not the redemption of Man.⁷⁸

Another argument concerns Theophanies (Christophanies), or appearances of the pre-incarnate Christ to persons in the Old Testament.⁷⁹ This concerns the history of salvation. Now virtually all Calvinists have accepted that Christ manifested Himself under the appearance of the Angel of the Lord and other forms, but most did not feel that these appearances were in His human nature but only in His divine nature. The problem is similar to the Calvinist-Lutheran controversy over the ubiquity of Christ's human nature.⁸⁰ The Pre-Existerians carried the orthodox doctrine to the extent of saying that Christ needed to have been human for the appearances to have personal and salvific validity.

This is not to say that advocates of the theory felt that Christ took on a physical body in eternity. We know of nobody who has even hinted at such a notion. The orthodox doctrine is that Christ had neither a human soul nor body before the Incarnation. This was even the view of A.W. Pink.⁸¹ Stevens, on the other hand, alleged that "he was God-Man

77. The Sinlessness of Jesus, pp.13, 18. Cf. John Gadsby, Hymn-Writers, p.120.

78. The Atonement, p.29.

79. Cf. Henry Kendall, 'Dr. Watts's Theory of Christ's Pre-Existent Human Nature', pp.436-437; J. Pye Smith, Christian Theology, p.492. On Theophanies see Chapter II, Section C above.

80. Hussey rejected the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity (Glory, p.203). There are a variety of Reformed alternatives to the Lutheran and Pre-Existerian explanations concerning Theophanies. One suggests that as Christ is not limited to space, so He is not limited to time and hence He could have appeared in a form of humanity before the Incarnation. This view takes on a different view of time and eternity, sometimes in the way in which the decrees are seen as co-ordinate rather than subordinate. But this way of viewing the situation has not been very popular with High and Hyper-Calvinists. The variations are more popular with Low Calvinists.

81. Godhead, p.154.

intellectual, before he was God-incarnate, and that all he took from Mary was a body", and "the person of the Lord Jesus was from the beginning just what he is now; his body only excepted".⁸² This clearly takes the orthodox position from the realm of virtuality to actuality. Silver counter-argued that as an elect person is predestined to become a son of God but does not actually become one until he is regenerated and he believes, so the Son of God was predestined to become a man but did not actually become one until the Incarnation.⁸³ The more orthodox position accepted that Christ had two natures and two wills, but these did not exist in Christ until the Incarnation.⁸⁴

One wonders which Bible references the Pre-Existerians rely on for their unusual theory. Colossians I is a favourite one to show the pre-eminency of Christ. They regularly appeal to Proverbs 8⁸⁵ and the Theophanic references as well. Some have tried to frame the theory from I Timothy 2:5-6,⁸⁶ while others use I Corinthians 15:47⁸⁷ or Philippians 2:5-11. The Son of Man and Logos passages from John's Gospel are often employed (e.g., 1:14, 1:51, 3:13, 5:26, 17:5, etc.). But by and large they rely on inference from other doctrines coupled with an interpretation of the usual Christological passages governed by an extreme Supralapsarian hermeneutic.

We can give only the barest outline of the controversy here, but its relevance to our discussion of Hyper-Calvinism can not be over-looked. It also serves as an important backdrop to the doctrine of eternal adoption. If there were strong differences of opinion over when Christ became the Son of God, there was almost no disagreement over when the elect became sons of God.

82. The Sinlessness of Jesus, p.27; A Scriptural Display, p.15. Cf. Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, p.28.

83. The Saint's Conformity to the Image of the Son. This should not be confused with the theory that Christ's sonship refers to the virgin birth. This theory has several variants. Some contend that according to Luke 1:35, Christ had deity only by virtue of not having a human father. This is basically the Arian position, though some Arians vary on it. Others resemble Ridgeley in holding to the eternal and full deity of Christ (unlike the Arians) but say that 'Son of God' and other terms refer to the Incarnation and not eternal generation.

84. E.g., Gill, Comm on Matt. 26:39.

85. E.g., Hussey's Glory. Contrariwise, see Silver's The Saint's Conformity to the Image of the Son.

86. E.g., Stevens, A Scriptural Display, p.250.

87. Cf. Pink, Godhead, p.147.

F. ETERNAL ADOPTION

Dr. Gill saw adoption as "a blessing of grace which exceeds (all) other blessings".¹ It was planned in the Covenant but the Fall of Man prevented "their actual and personal enjoyment of it".² Therefore Christ came to earth to remove the obstacles so that the adoption of the elect could be manifested and applied.

This immediately introduces the actual-virtual scheme. According to Gill, the elect are actually adopted from eternity, for there is little or no differences between adoption and election. Adoption is "God's choice or election of some to be his children".³ It is an immanent act of God as such. "As the will of God to elect any is his election of them, so his will to adopt the same is his adoption of them."⁴ He bases his whole argument upon this assumption. Since the one is immanent and eternal, the other is also necessarily immanent and eternal.

This is but another indication of Gill's fascination with the eternal and secret will of God. There was a similar obsession in the highest of the Puritan Federalists, such as Ames.⁵ Gill admits that there are both parallels and differences between divine adoption and civil adoption, especially in the light of varying customs and laws in different societies.⁶ His fine point about the eternality of adoption has to a large

1. Body, p.523. On eternal adoption, see Body, pp.201-203, 519-528; Comm on II Cor. 6:18, Gal. 3:26, 4:5, Rom. 8:29, Eph. 1:5. It was also held by many others, such as Hussey, Glory, pp.568ff; Brine, Motives, pp.35ff.; Irons, Jazer, p.53; Kershaw, Grace Alone, p.147. See especially Well's sermon, 'The Order of Eternal Adoption', in Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, 1870, pp.241-252. For Hoeksema's views of adoption, see IK, vol.III, pp.481-493. It was also held by some of the Puritan Federalists (such as Witsius, Economy, vol.I, pp.403-416; vol.II, pp.1-13), though it took on a special meaning within Supralapsarianism. Toon's definition of Hyper-Calvinism includes the doctrine of eternal adoption (HC, p.144. Cf. p.111). On adoption in a more general sense, see John Gadsby, Slavery, Adoption and Redemption.

2. S & T', vol.I, p.416. Cf. Comm on Gal. 4:5, John 1:12, Jer. 3:19; S & T', vol.I, pp.252, 299-300.

3. Body, p.201. See also Gadsby's definition (Works, vol.II, p.66), that of the Westminster Longer Catechism (Question 74), and Hale (Catechism, p.45).

4. Body, p.201. Cf. Comm on Jer. 3:19.

5. Gill appealed to Ames on eternal adoption (Body, pp.203, 518). It is unknown whether Crisp held to eternal adoption in the exact way that Gill did, though Davis probably did (cf. Rehokosht, p.17).

6. Cf. Body, pp.519-521.

extent depended upon seventeenth and eighteenth century English civil adoption, though he tries at times to base it on ancient Hebrew customs. One of these ancient customs was the same in Gill's day and forms one of his major arguments for eternal adoption:

... if a woman marries a king's son, she becomes the king's daughter; so the elect of God ... being espoused to the Son of God, they become sons and daughters of the Lord God almighty, the King of Kings.'

However Gill seems to overlook his other remarks that although the elect are espoused and betrothed to Christ in the Covenant, they are not actually married till their conversion and the consummation at the Second Coming. Gill persists in holding that the elect are married and therefore adopted from eternity. If the will to elect is election, the will to espouse and marry is espousal and marriage. The Covenant of Grace is a marriage contract. The elect are espoused to Christ before they know it or even exist.

Gill stresses that "adoption ... exists before it is received" and that it is not in any way dependent on faith for either the establishing, confirmation or manifestation of it.⁸ The elect do in fact believe when it is manifested but faith is not the condition of adoption. Its reception does not "add any thing to the thing itself".⁹ God's gift of faith is merely the channel by which He reveals his adoption. "It is not faith that makes them children, but what makes them appear to be so."¹⁰ However, no man can be assured of his adoption, or enjoy its blessings, until he actually believes.¹¹

Moreover, adoption is not to be equated with regeneration. Both concern the elect's relationship to God as children but the differences between the two are vital. Gill's own summary is self-explanatory:

7. Body, p.203.

8. Comm on Gal. 4:5, John 1:12; Body, p.201.

9. Comm on Gal. 4:5.

10. Body, p.201. Cf. Comm on Rom. 8:19, Gal. 3:26, John 1:12; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.311-313; Sawyer, p.22.

11. Comm on John 1:12. Huntington: "There is pre-adoption, or predestination to the adoption of sons, which is known to God alone; until, upon our believing, it is manifested to us also" (Posthumous Letters, vol.II, p.189).

Adoption does not first commence at regeneration ... Regeneration is not the foundation of adoption, but adoption the foundation of regeneration ... they are regenerated because they are adopted ... The act of adoption is previous to any work of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of his people.¹²

Adoption is before regeneration; the one is an act of God's will in eternity, the other is an act and work of his grace in time; the one is the cause, the other the effect.¹³

Adoption, then, is the actual choice of persons to be sons and the actual making them legal sons, while regeneration is their actual enjoyment of this privilege.

How did this view compare with those of the Puritans? The Westminster Standards do not explicitly state whether adoption is either eternal or temporal but the Longer Catechism (Question 74) places it after justification. One concludes that since justification is not actually eternal, neither is adoption. The higher Federalists, however, tended to put adoption before justification in the ordo salutis, though still after election. This is an extremely fine point and only rarely discussed by any. Election is completely and actually eternal; so is adoption. On the other hand, justification (as we shall see) is only virtually eternal.¹⁴ The point at issue concerns whether they are elected and adopted as sinners or not. We have already seen how Gill deals with this as an apex logicus. Since he equates adoption with election, we can assume that what he says about election and permission of sin applies to adoption as well.

12. Body, p.202.

13. Body, p.521. On regeneration, see Body, pp.528-552 and Comm on John 3. Pittman feels that Two-Seeders deny the need of the new birth (Questions, p.96).

14. On the relation between adoption and justification, see Body, pp.201-203, 518-519. On eternal justification see Chapter VI below.

G. ETERNAL UNION

The question of eternal union has rarely been discussed outside of Reformed circles, while it has remained a favourite fine point of debate among and between both High and Hyper-Calvinists.¹ John Gill wrote much about it² and appealed to a number of very High Puritan Federalists such as Goodwin, Richardson, Witsius, and Cotton, not to mention Crisp the Antinomian.³ The question is basically this: are the elect united to Christ before or after they believe? It can also be put: what is the nature of their union with Christ?

The debate closely parallels the issue about eternal adoption and justification, but there are a few distinctive and important points which we must mention. As with these other two Covenant blessings, union with Christ is based upon election.⁴ The final eschatological union is part of the beatific vision and is the ultimate glory of election.⁵ This election-union is the first of four ways in which Gill views eternal union: election union, conjugal-union, federal-union, and legal-union.⁶

1. Some have defined or described Antinomianism and Hyperism in terms of eternal union. See Toon, HC, pp.110, 117. Pittman includes this in his definition of Two-Seedism(Questions, p.96). E.S. Williams either exaggerates or errs in stating in his definition of Antinomianism, "In salvation there is a union, spoken of as being identified with Christ, which makes the believer one with Him in all respects" (Systematic Theology, vol.I, p.233) Hussey accepted that a mark of Antinomianism, which he believed in, was the doctrine of union before faith (Glory, pp.146, 602).

2. See especially Body, pp.198-201. Pink: "The one writer who appears to have been blest with a clearer insight into this great mystery than most of his fellows was John Gill ... though he, in turn, received help, no doubt, from the writings of James Hussey [sic], the high Calvinist of the seventeenth century" (Union, pp.50-51).

3. Body, pp.199, 201; S & T¹, vol.III, pp.4-8, 17-18, 25. For Chauncey, see Neonomianism, Part II, pp.219-253. Hyper-Calvinists have often referred to the doctrine. See Pink, Spiritual Union and Communion; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, pp.268-289; Care, pp.6-8; Huntington, Works, vol.XII, pp.243-269; Colyer, The Everlasting Union of Christ and His Saints; S.E. Pierce, Sermons Doctrinal, vol.II, pp.107-132; Riches of Divine Grace, pp.96-113; Philpot, Spiritual Union; Hawker, Works, vol.II, pp.285-328; Irons, Jazer, pp.56-62; Hale, Catechism, p.43. Wilks based his doctrine of eternal sanctification on the doctrine of eternal union (p.397). Philpot noted that Gadsby's favourite doctrine was the eternal Covenantal union of Christ and the elect (cf. Memoir of Gadsby, pp.99-100). For Calvin's views of union, see Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life, pp.17-27.

4. Cf. S & T¹, vol.II, p.95; S & T², vol.III, p.15; Body, p.205; Hussey, Operations, pp.171-177; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.258, 313-314; vol.II, pp.35-37, 92, 192-198.

5. S & T¹, vol.I, pp.69, 104-122.

6. Body, pp.199-201. Elsewhere he lists three: a natural sense, a law-sense and a mystical sense (Body, p.482). Popham mentions the "covenant union that there is between Christ and the church" (Sermons, vol.I, p.94). Pink names two kinds of union: judicial (legal) and vital (spiritual) (Holy Spirit, p.88).

The first concerns the origin and nearness of the union and follows the analogy of the body and head. The second has already been mentioned and follows the pattern of Jewish betrothal, espousal, and marriage. These three stages of marriage are analogous to election, conversion, and glorification.⁷ A wife is truly and legally married to the husband from the moment of betrothal in the marriage contract, even if she has never even met him.

The federal union is particularly pertinent to our discussion. In this, Christ is the representative of the elect in the Covenant of Grace. The elect are represented 'in Christ' and therefore have a being in and union with Him. The legal union is similar to this in that Christ was the surety for the elect in the Covenant.⁸

This union is not only before faith but also eternal. This is deduced by a simple syllogism: the union is as early as Christ's office as Mediator; that office is eternal; therefore the union is eternal.⁹ On the other hand, this does not mean that the elect had an actual existence from eternity. Only God has an eternally actual existence. The elect were united to Christ federally "when as yet there were none of them in actual being" and "nor was the real existence of the persons elect necessary to their real union to Christ, only that they should certainly exist" in time.¹⁰ Their union was the same as their existence. Both were only virtual and representative, not to mention decretive. Their virtual being in Christ necessitates a union with Christ. As Gill confessed, "how they can be said to have a being in Christ, and yet have no union to him, I cannot conceive".¹¹ Both their being and union are merely virtual; Gill knows nothing of eternal actual being or union. Moreover, the elect's representative being and union precede (and are foundational for) their actual being and union in time. "They were in the hands of Christ, before they were in the loins of Christ."¹² Brine argues by comparing it with the federal union with Adam: "as we were in Adam prior to the imputation of his offence to us, so we were in Christ prior

7. Body, p.200.

8. Body, p.200. Cf. S & T¹, vol.II, p.95; S & T², vol.III, p.26.

9. Comm on John 14:20.

10. Comm on John 17:6; S & T¹, vol.II, p.98. Cf. Body, p.205.

11. Body, p.199. Cf. S & T², vol.III, p.15.

12. Comm on John 10:28.

to the imputation of his righteousness to us".¹³

Note the strict dichotomy of eternity and time in this scheme, with the former taking precedence over the latter. This, of course, is typical of Gill. So too is the following observation: "There's a secret being in Christ from everlasting ... and there's an open being in Christ at conversion ... faith does not put man into Christ, but (only) makes him appear to be in him".¹⁴ The secret being is not based on our faith but is founded entirely on grace before faith. In Gill's theology, faith is always but the evidence of grace, never the cause or means or condition. The pre-faith eternal union is based solely on the love of God for the elect.¹⁵ It is based on what God does for us rather than on what He does in us. The union is not based on the actual bestowal of the Holy Spirit at regeneration. The Spirit, like faith, "is the evidence, and not the bond of their union to God".¹⁶

This stops short of the position of Crisp's bold language. Crisp himself never taught that the elect had an actual being or union in Christ, though his language sometimes seems to suggest this. Rather, this just appears to be another instance of Crisp's strong language for emphasis and literary effect. Similarly, Hussey also sounds as if he taught that the elect have an actual being and union in Christ. Most likely Hussey is just following Crisp's example. It is possible that this is also the case with his theory of the actual existence of Christ's eternal nature and soul, but there he adds a number of conjectures not found in Crisp. Hussey's difficult literary style and theological progression is markedly different from Crisp's. Indeed there is little like it in any writings of Antinomians, High or Hyper-Calvinists. Crisp is basically sermonic and Gill is rigidly systematic, but Hussey hops from one subject to another with no noticeable pattern of transition. This makes it most difficult to interpret his views on both eternal humanity of Christ and eternal union.

When it is seen that Gill and others taught only a virtual and

13. Brine, Imputation, p.23.

14. Comm on II Cor. 5:17. Cf. S & T¹, vol.I, pp.395-396, 557; Comm on Rom. 6:3, II Cor. 5:21; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.313.

15. Body, p.98; S & T¹, vol.I, pp.395-396; S & T¹, vol.III, p.26.

16. S & T², vol.III, p.20 (cf. also p.25). Cf. Dell, Works, p.41.

representative union, the charge of Gnosticizing¹⁷ is shown to be completely unfounded. Hussey may tend in that direction but the others were more cautious. It may be true that some of the early Gnostics followed the Platonists in teaching that all human souls are eternal but mainstream Hyper-Calvinism certainly taught no such thing. In this Gill and the others merely followed orthodox Federalism. The Westminster Longer Catechism (Question 66), for example, states that actual (real) union occurs only in effectual calling. As with most other doctrines, the differences here between High and Hyper-Calvinism are minor and due only to emphasis.

Finally, this doctrine of eternal union is closely related to the Supralapsarian election from the 'pure mass'. It is the bridge between Supralapsarian election and eternal justification. Gill:

... by electing grace men were put into Christ, and were considered as in him before the foundation of the world; and if they were considered as in him, they must be considered as righteous or unrighteous; not surely as unrighteous, unjustified, and in a state of condemnation; for there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ, Rom.viii.1 and therefore must be considered as righteous, and so justified.¹⁸

The implications of this for eternal justification will be considered further in the chapter on Justification. But we will add one additional quote from Gill here:

I have carefully avoided calling justification, or union from eternity, actual ... eternal justification is actual, as it is an immanent act in God that justifies; and eternal union is actual, as it is an act of God's everlasting love to his elect.¹⁹

Here Gill associates the two. What he is saying is this: as far as God is concerned, eternal justification and union are both actual; but as far as the elect are concerned, neither justification nor union are eternal or actual. This presents some difficulties for the actual-virtual scheme unless one keeps in mind the mirror effect of time and eternity in Gill's Supralapsarianism. But we will discuss this further in Chapter VI.

17. So Campbell, 'Antinomian Controversy', p.72.

18. Body, p.205. Gill appeals to Goodwin on this point.

19. S & T¹, vol.II, p.88.

H. THE COVENANT OF WORKS

Being in the tradition of the Puritan Federalists, Gill held that the eternal Covenant of Grace is applied in time and history.¹ This one Covenant is the basis for all the lesser covenants and is revealed progressively through them.² Fundamental to Federal theology is that historical salvation is based upon progressive revelation of this Covenant. This view differs greatly from the 'chance' view of Epicureanism, the pantheistic fatalism of Stoicism, the anthropocentric view of Arminianism, and the existential Heilsgeschichte of twentieth-century Neo-Orthodoxy.

To begin with, Gill compares the history of progressive revelation with the gradual appearance of the sun during the course of a day.³ But what is actually revealed? God reveals Himself but He does that through manifesting the Covenant of Grace, for there is no salvific and true knowledge of God outside of the Covenant of Grace. Repeatedly Gill speaks of the Covenant being revealed, manifested, applied, administered, and dispensed.⁴ Again we see the ascendancy of the eternal over the temporal.

The Covenant itself is fully immanent and within the Trinity. It is not made with Man. Gill explains:

When, therefore, at any time, we read of the covenant of grace, being made with a particular person, or with particular persons, it must always be understood of (God's) making it manifest to them; or of a revelation of the covenant, and of an application of covenant blessings to them.⁵

1. See especially, Body, pp.345-377. For a representative presentation of the orthodox Federalist doctrine of the Covenant of Works, see Witsius, Economy, vol.I, pp.28-134. Cf. Heppe, pp.281-319.

2. On Gill's view of progressive revelation, see Body, Introduction, pp.xxxii-xxxvii. For the Puritan view, see Witsius, Economy, vol.I, pp.274-290; vol.II, pp.116-403. On the Hyperist view of the history of salvation and the covenants, see Pink, Covenants; Revelation, pp.46-60; S.E. Pierce, Discourses on the Several Revelations of the Lord Jesus Christ; Hoeksema, Believers, pp.72-97.

3. Comm on Song 6:10. Cf. S & T¹, vol.I, p.23.

4. E.g., Body, pp.247, 345; S & T¹, vol.II, pp.282, 341, 413; Comm on Luke 1:72, Jer. 31:31. So also Westminster Confession (VII:5); Baptist Confession of 1689 (VII:3); Keach, Display, pp.170ff.; Fuller (cf. Kirkby, pp.194-195), and others.

5. S & T¹, vol.II, p.282. Cf. Comm on Jer. 31:31.

This, however, concerns only the Covenant of Grace as such, for God has indeed made a Covenant of Works with Man in Adam. These two Covenants are essentially different from each other and are, in fact, the only two Covenants that God has ever made at all. All other covenants are but mixtures of the two, sometimes more of the one than the other.⁶ This is vital to an understanding of Federalism. There is but one Covenant of Grace and it has always remained the same in all ages,⁷ but it has been variously revealed throughout history. So, too, there is but one Covenant of Works with Adam but this too has been stretched out in history.

According to Gill there are five main manifestations of the Covenant of Grace: to Adam after the Fall, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, and through Christ.⁸ After each of these was a period of administration or dispensation.⁹ When Gill speaks of these 'dispensations'¹⁰ he is not at all advocating what later came to be known as Dispensationalism.¹¹ Federalism and Dispensationalism are similar in some things and certainly have more in common with each other than either has with Deism, Socinianism, Romanism or the other schools which both oppose. Nevertheless there are significant differences. Dispensationalists are almost always 'four point Calvinists' (i.e., reject limited atonement) and are therefore usually Low Calvinists. Low Calvinism borders on Federalism but cannot accurately be considered Federalist itself. There is a wider sense, generally eschatological, in which a certain kind of evangelical Arminianism is relatively compatible with some of the distinctives of Dispensationalism. It has often correctly been claimed

6. So also Keach, Everlasting Covenant, p.7; Brine, Covenant, pp.16-18; and Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.84 (but cf. p.251). Calvin, however, seems to have taught that there was only one covenant: "God has never made any other covenant than that He made formerly with Abraham and at length confirmed by the hand of Moses" (Comm. on Jeremiah and Lamentations, vol.IV, p.127). Cf. Toon, HC, p.20. On Gill's doctrine of the Covenant of Works, see especially Body, pp.311-316. Heppe (pp.281-319) gives a good history of Reformed teaching on the Covenant of Works.

7. Body, pp.247, 345; S & T¹, vol.II, p.355. So also Westminster Confession (VII:6); Perkins, Works, vol.I, p.70.

8. Body, pp.116-117.

9. Body, pp.348-360.

10. E.g., Comm on Psa. 27:1, Heb. 9:15. So too Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.145.

11. On Dispensationalism, see Bass, The Background to Dispensationalism; Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today; and the major Dispensational writers (J.N. Darby, William Kelley, C.I. Scofield, L.S. Chafer, Clarence Larkin and John Walvoord).

that Federalism emphasizes the unity of the dispensations and that Dispensationalism stresses the differences. This is true but the real difference lies in their views of the place of national Israel in Biblical history and eschatology. Federalism is usually either Amillennial or Post-Millennial and therefore sees the Church as the culmination of the progressive economy of God, whereas Dispensationalism is always Pre-millennial and feels that national Israel is still the centre of God's historic dealings with Man. For the one, the Church is spiritual Israel and heir of the Old Testament covenants and promises and prophecies (at least most of them), while the other sees national Israel as heir to the as-yet-unfulfilled covenants, prophecies and promises. Another important difference is that Dispensational writers invariably reject the terminology of Federalism, especially 'the Covenant of Works'.

Now, Gill himself noted that there are differences and similarities between the several dispensations. Both are relative to the mixture of the two main covenants and depend upon their proximity to the first and last manifestations of the Covenant of Grace (i.e., to Adam and through Christ). There are five main agreements between the first manifestation, which is the corporate of all Old Testament dispensations and applications, and the second manifestation through Christ:

(1) the efficient cause, God ... (2) the moving cause, the sovereign mercy, and free-grace of God ... (3) the Mediator, who is Christ ... (4) the subjects, the elect of God ... (5) the blessings of it (which are) salvation and redemption ... justification ... forgiveness ... regeneration ... spiritual circumcision, and sanctification (and) eternal life.¹²

There are eight main differences:

(1) Under the first administration, saints looked forward to Christ ... under the second ... believers look backwards to Christ... (2) There is a greater clearness and evidence of things under the one than under the other ... (3) There is more of a spirit of liberty, and less of bondage, under the one, than under the other ... (4) There is a larger and more plentiful effusion of the Spirit, and of his gifts and graces (under the second) ... (5) The latter administration of the covenant extends to more persons than the former ... (6) The present administration of the

12. Body, p.346. Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.144-145.

covenant of grace, will continue to the end of the world ... (7) The ordinances of them are different ... (8) The promises and blessings of grace ... (are) differently exhibited.¹³

As we noted in Chapter II, typology played a large part in the Hyper-Calvinist view of progressive revelation of the Covenant of Grace. Gill summarizes:

... the former administration of the covenant of grace, reaching from the fall of Adam to the coming of Christ, was by types and figures, by shadows and sacrifices, and by promises and prophecies of future things, which are now fulfilled.¹⁴

The same typological hermeneutic shared by Gill and the Puritans was responsible for interpreting Genesis 1-3 in a federal way. These admitted that nowhere in these first three chapters of the Bible is ever mentioned a 'Covenant of Works'.¹⁵ Curiously, Gill is silent on the Covenant of Works in his extensive Commentary on these chapters, though there are occasional observations which presuppose an acceptance of it.¹⁶ The existence of such a Covenant is deduced by inference like this:

That there was a covenant with Adam, I suppose, will not be denied, since a promise of life was made to him upon his obedience, and death was threatened in case of disobedience, to which he agreed in his state of innocence all which formally constitutes a covenant, and is so called, Hos.vi.7, 'They like men, or Adam, have transgressed the covenant'. That this covenant was made with Adam and his posterity, in which he was their federal head and representative, appears from his being called 'the figure of him that was to come'... Without allowing such a covenant made with Adam and his posterity ... it cannot be accounted for, how Adam's sin should bring death on many, or render them liable to be treated as sinners.¹⁷

13. Body, p.347.

14. Body, p.360. (Cf. also pp.348-360). So also Westminster Confession (VII:3); Gadsby (Works, vol.I, p.107) and the massive Tropologia of Keach.

15. Cf. Kevan, p.111; Pink, Covenants, p.46; Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, p.514.

16. E.g., Comm on Gen. 2:17, 3:22, 3:24.

17. S & T¹, vol.II, p.151. Cf. Body, pp.312, 317; Comm on Hosea 6:7. On the Covenant with Adam, see Body, pp.311-316; Pink, Covenants, pp.27-62; Gleanings from the Scriptures, pp.38-56; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.214-226. On the reference to Hosea 6:17, see Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, pp.113-114; Dogmatics, pp.220-221.

In other words, the reasons are three: the existence of promises and agreement (stipulation and restipulation), the exegesis of Hosea 6:7, and original sin. The last is particularly significant for us to note: Gill bases a doctrine of the Covenant of Works upon original sin rather than vice-versa.

Puritan Calvinists used various terms to describe this Covenant of Works: the Covenant of Innocency (Baxter), of Friendship (Strong, Burgess), of Bounty and Goodness (Ball, Cox), of Creation (Cox), and of Nature (Goodwin, Cocceius).¹⁸ Gill used several of these (Friendship, Nature, Innocency) and others (such as the Legal Covenant, the Covenant of Life, etc.)¹⁹ but his favourite name for it was the same as the favourite of the Puritan Federalists – the Covenant of Works.

This covenant was not made with Adam merely as an individual. In it Adam acted as representative of all mankind.²⁰ Nor was this a bilateral covenant in the strict sense of the term, for God has never properly contracted with any man. Nevertheless it came much closer to being such and can loosely be considered bilateral in some aspects. But it was basically a unilateral covenant in that it was a law imposed upon Adam by God rather than an agreement with Adam by God. Gill:

... man (Adam) was not left to his liberty; it was not at his option, whether he would assent to the proposal in the covenant, and the condition of it; he had not an alternative given to him, to agree or not agree, since obedience was due to God, whether he promised him anything or no ... So that this covenant made with Adam, is not strictly and properly a covenant, such as is among men, but is rather a covenant on one side, as a covenant of promise is; and a covenant of God with man, rather than a covenant of man with God.²¹

At this point Gill posits that "the same to be both a law and a covenant, is not at all inconsistent".²² The Covenant of Works "taken in its complex view (was) both natural and positive".²³ Gill does not

18. Kevan, p.111; Heppe, p.284.

19. Cf. Body, p.313.

20. So, for example, S & T¹, vol.II, pp.151, 339; S & T², vol.II, p.90.

21. Body, p.314.

22. Body, p.312. For the Gospel Standard doctrine that the Gospel (i.e., the New Covenant) and not the Law (the Old Covenant of Works) is the believer's rule, see Chapter X.

23. Ibid.

elaborate on the details of the giving of this Covenant/Law but two points can be observed: this law was written on Adam's heart (and subsequently on the hearts of all his posterity)²⁴ and its substance is the same as the Moral Law (the Decalogue),²⁵ which is summed up in the command "Do this and you will live".²⁶ Adam, however, "in his state of innocence, could not keep himself from falling".²⁷

Upon Adam's breaking the Covenant of Works, the Covenant of Grace was immediately and initially manifested.²⁸ This Covenant was revealed then in the same basic way as it is now - through the Gospel, which is a transcript of the Covenant - and this Gospel was preached to Adam and Eve by Christ Himself.²⁹ Thus began the historical progression of the revelation of the Covenant of Grace. The next manifestation was made to Noah, but this too was a mixture of both Works and Grace Covenants. It included the provision for preservation and in this Noah represented all mankind as Adam had.³⁰ This manifestation receives but little attention in Scripture and as little in Gill's writings.

A major manifestation and change in the manner of manifestation occurred in the calling of Abraham. In this mixed manifestation of the two Covenants we learn that Abraham - unlike both Adam and Noah - did not represent all mankind. As Noah's Covenant had the distinctive of preservation, so Abraham's had the unique feature of his

24. Comm on Psa. 37:31; Body, p.312.

25. Body, p.312; S & T', vol.II, p.116; S & T', vol.I, pp.231, 357; Comm on John 1:17.

26. S & T', vol.II, p.90. So also Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.84; Keach, Everlasting Covenant, p.7; The Practical Use of Saving Knowledge (Introduction); Bellamy, True Religion, pp.26, 307; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.103, 115, 272; Pink, Reconciliation, p.93; and Stevens, Help, vol.II, p.4.

27. Comm on Jude 24. This remarkable statement implies that the Fall was necessary, for otherwise Gill would have said "did not keep himself from falling". On the necessity of the Fall, see our comments in Chapter IV. On the relationship between Adam's innocency and Pre-Existerianism, see Vigors M'Culla, Adam's Primeval State Proved Spiritual and the Pre-Existence of the Man Christ Denied.

28. S & T', vol.II, p.339; Comm on Jer. 31:31. Cf. Westminster Confession (Chapter VII) and Keach, Display, pp.170ff.

29. Comm on Gal. 3:8; Heb. 2:3; Deut. 32:17; Job 32:19; Mark 1:1; S & T', vol.I, p.418. So also Baptist Confession of 1689 (VII:3); Bellamy, True Religion, p.401.

30. S & T', vol.II, pp.339-340; Body, Introduction, p.xxxiv; Comm on Gen. 9:9, Deut. 32:17, Luke 1:72. Cf. Pink, Covenants, pp.63-87.

representing only a portion of mankind. It is granted that both Adam and Noah represented all mankind mainly because they were the only ones on earth with the exceptions of their wives and offspring. Abraham, on the other hand, was not alone on earth. Consequently, some parts of his covenant concerned only a portion of mankind - Israel - and so too some of the blessings were earthly and not spiritual. In this respect his was a national covenant, a conditional covenant, and a covenant of works.³¹

This covenant with Abraham was a 'mixed' covenant containing both spiritual and earthly blessings.³² Being a Baptist, Gill asserted that the 'Covenant of Circumcision' aspect of Abraham's covenant was a continuation of the Covenant of Works, since it was conditional, earthly in blessings, etc. This is claimed even though this aspect is called 'an Everlasting Covenant' and typologically predicted the shedding of Christ's blood.³³ The Covenant of Grace, on the other hand, was revealed to Abraham before the enjoining of circumcision. This manifestation was, like Adam's, once again through the Gospel and preached to him by Christ.³⁴

The main point which Gill makes is that Abraham's covenant was mixed in nature, conditions, and promises. Also significant is that he claims that not all of those in the Covenant of Circumcision were in the eternal Covenant of Grace, nor were all of those in the Covenant of Grace who were living at that time (such as Melchizedek) also in the Covenant of Circumcision.³⁵ Abraham was in both.³⁶ So was Isaac through Abraham, but not Ishmael.

The next historical manifestation was also a mixture. This was the series of covenantal dealings with Moses. As with Abraham, the Mosaic Covenant was a national covenant and a 'civil contract' for Israel.³⁷

31. Body, pp.248, 903-904; S & T¹, vol.II, pp.263, 281; S & T², vol.III, pp.28, 121. Cf. Atkinson, Faith, pp.29-40; Pink, Covenants, pp.89-138.

32. S & T¹, vol.II, p.282; vol.I, p.466; Body, p.904.

33. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.281, 465, 475; Comm on Gen. 17:7, 11.

34. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.464, 466, 282-283; Comm on Gal. 3:8, John, 8:56-58.

35. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.281, 464.

36. S & T¹, vol.II, p.464.

37. Body, p.968; S & T¹, vol.II, p.431; S & T², vol.II, p.28. Hussey speaks of the Covenant at ... Cont'd:

In this it presents something of the Covenant of Works. At this point critics contend that there are aspects of Federalism that closely parallel the political notion of the 'social contract'. The Federalist, including Gill, respond that the 'social contract' idea arose out of Calvinist Federalism and its socio-political implications. They would further claim that the basis of Federalism is theological and not political.

There were bilateral aspects of the Sinaitic Covenant even as there had been in Eden. The Edenic Covenant of Works was the Moral Law in essence. It was broken by Adam but renewed "in a new edition of it in writing" at Sinai.³⁸ This too was a formal contract of stipulation and restipulation, of conditional promises and the agreement of obedience.³⁹ Yet the Covenant of Grace was also manifested at that time, particularly in the Covenant being a type of the marriage contract with Christ.⁴⁰

This mixture occurred in two stages: at Sinai and at Horeb. The latter was forty years later, was made with the children of those at Sinai, and included further information about the future and ultimate revelation of the Covenant of Grace (such as the conversion of the Gentiles, the coming of the Messiah, the conversion of the Jews and their return to the Promised Land in the latter days).⁴¹

The next revelation was given to Joshua,⁴² but this was mostly a national covenant and differed little from those at Sinai and Horeb. Several hundred years later were two further covenants. These were manifestations of the eternal Covenant to David and to Solomon, but these were almost entirely typological and contained very little by way of the Covenant of Works or national Israel.⁴³

Cont'd:...

Sinai as a broken church-covenant (Glory, p.171).

38. Comm on John 1:17. On Gill's distinction between the Covenant of Works at Eden and at Sinai, see Comm on Heb. 8:7. Cf. Pink, Covenants, pp.139-201.

39. Comm on Ex. 19:5, 24:7, 34:27.

40. Comm on Lev. 20:5, 16; Jer. 31:32, Zech. 9:11.

41. Comm on Deut. 29:1; S & T, vol.II, p.431.

42. Comm on Joshua 24:25.

43. Cf. Comm on II Samuel 7, I Kings 8, Psa. 89; Pink, Covenants, pp.203-256.

All of these manifestations, especially the Sinaitic, together constituted the first or Old Testament-Covenant. Of the second or New one Gill remarks:

... though the covenant (of Grace) is called a new and second covenant, yet only with respect to the former administration of it, under the legal dispensation; and both administrations of it, under the law and under the gospel, are so many exhibitions and manifestations of the covenant under different forms, which was made in eternity.⁴⁴

In the historical development of the two Covenants is to be seen the gradual abolition of that of Works and the ascendancy of that of Grace. With Adam came the first of both, but with Christ came the full exhibition of that of Grace and the virtual abolition of that of Works.⁴⁵ Only in a very limited sense can one say that the Covenant of Works is still in effect. Gill:

... there was an intermixture of law and gospel under the former dispensation, as there also is in the present one; they are intersperced in both testaments; though the law was more largely held forth than the gospel, under the former dispensation; and therefore we commonly call it the legal dispensation; and there is more of the gospel than the law under the present dispensation.⁴⁶

Since the Covenant of Works was based upon and contained the Moral Law, it has some advisory and illustrative role in the New Covenant dispensation. However, Gill stresses, the Moral Law was never "of faith". That is, it concerned only obedience to the revealed will of God. In Old Testament days the promises of the Messiah called for faith, but this aspect belonged to the Covenant of Grace.⁴⁷ There was neither a promise of the Messiah nor revelation of the Covenant of Grace to Adam until there was a need for them, which occurred only after the Fall. The penalty for disobeying the Covenant of Works continues, for all men are still responsible to obey the Moral Law. This relates primarily only

44. S & T¹, vol.II, p.413. Cf. S & T¹, vol.I, p.418; vol.II, p.341; S & T², vol.II, p.90; Body, p.247; Cause, p.116; Comm on Isa. 24:5, 65:17; Jer. 31:31; Matt. 26:28; Zech. 11:10; Heb. 8:13, 9:15.

45. Comm on Heb 8:13, Zech. 11:10, Psa. 89:39. S & T², vol.II, p.90; Body, pp.361-367.

46. Body, pp.367. Cf. Comm on Gal. 3:12; Brine, Motives, p.47.

47. Cf. Brine, Motives, p.37.

to non-Christians, for the Moral Law has been abolished as a Covenant of Works for all that believe.

This is a very fine point which we will further examine in Chapter X on Antinomianism. The popular question was asked, 'Does the Moral Law continue in the New Covenant dispensation?' The usual High and Hyper-Calvinist answer was, "It does not continue as a Covenant of Works for salvation but continues as a rule for practice". Federalist divines of all persuasions debated at length just what this means. Gill, for example, prefaces his discussions with the statement that the Covenant of Works provided no means for justification, pardon, salvation, life or eternal life⁴⁸ (perhaps because it had no mediator or messenger⁴⁹). Nor has the Moral Law ever given to Man the ability to obey its precepts,⁵⁰ nor was it intended to do so, for "God never designed that man should attain eternal life, merely by his obedience to the law of works".⁵¹

The Covenant of Works can be and has been broken and superceded, but the Covenant of Grace cannot and never will be broken or superceded.⁵² That of Works was conditional upon Man's works, but that of Grace is dependent solely upon God. Salvation is totally of grace and not of works. Therefore salvation is only through the Covenant of Grace.

At this point Gill adds some remarks which very likely (and rarely) reflect something of his own experience:

Every good man desires to be led more and more into this covenant (of Grace), into the nature, fulness, and glory of it ... and especially their full interest in it ... It is natural for men, until they are better enlightened, to desire to be saved by a covenant of works ... and it is natural for every man to think and say, he must do something to be saved. But one that is better enlightened into the covenant of grace and the scheme of salvation, desires to be saved by this covenant of grace, and no other; saved by grace, and not by works.⁵³

48. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.90-91, 101; S & T¹, vol.I, p.415; Body, p.315.

49. Cf. Comm on Malachi 3:1.

50. Comm on Gal. 3:20.

51. S & T¹, vol.II, p.293.

52. S & T¹, vol.II, p.95; S & T¹, vol.II, p.281; Body, p.347.

53. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.102-103.

In this he refers especially to the conversion of the three thousand on the Day of Pentecost. In Chapter VIII we will discuss how this position presents some problems. For example, were these three thousand 'sensible sinners' already converted or were they as yet unconverted? We will discuss in Chapter X the Gospel Standard doctrine as it relates to the abolition of the Moral Law as a Covenant of Works. Briefly we mention that Gill followed the Puritans in holding that the Moral Law continues as a 'rule' or standard but not as a Covenant of Works; whereas those of the Gospel Standard persuasion (especially Gadsby) contend that the Moral Law is indistinguishable and inseparable from the Covenant of Works. For them, therefore, the Moral Law is not a rule or standard; only the Gospel is the standard, for the Gospel is the transcript of the Covenant of Grace.⁵⁴ One might well speculate that Gadsby went as much beyond Gill and the Puritans, as they went beyond Calvin.

It is not out of place here to make a few retrospective comments on Gill's Federalism. Firstly, his Covenantal theology clearly follows his emphasis (some say over-emphasis) on the sovereignty of God and the priority of the eternal and immanent over the temporal and transient. Some critics have felt that this position is rather Platonist in that reality (Ideas) are eternal and transcendent while history is merely a shadow.⁵⁵ The author agrees. Gill never appeals directly to Plato in his Federal exposition, but the similarities are striking. Besides, Gill elsewhere admits a great debt to Plato in some things (see Chapter II).

Secondly, the Covenant of Grace concerns the elect only, while the Covenant of Works concerns both elect and reprobate. That is, the one has to do with the elect as in the 'pure mass', while the other deals with the elect (and reprobate) as sinners. This relates back to his apex logicus of Supralapsarianism. The Covenant of Works is necessary for the application of the Covenant of Grace, even though the latter is more selective in its subjects. That of Works serves that of Grace. This parallels his views on reprobation. The reprobate are decreed and created for the purpose of serving the elect, not vice-versa. In the decree both Covenants were ordained but that of Grace was primary in end, importance and in point of logic. It may also be remembered that

54. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.7, 167.

55. E.g., Toon, HC, p.79.

Gill taught that what is first in intention is last in execution. Since he felt that the Covenant of Works was made in history before the first manifestation of the Covenant of Grace, he would deduce that the latter preceded the decree to make the Covenant of Works in the eternal ordo salutis.

Thirdly, it may be observed that though the Covenant of Grace is eternal, the Covenant of Works is not. That of Works is not manifested; it is made and repeated. To avoid lowering God to Man's level in covenanting with Adam, Gill interjects the point that the Covenant of Works is not entirely bilateral. It is still mainly a law from sovereign to Man. But lest even this be misconstrued as teaching the popular antinomy of sovereignty and responsibility, he further pictures the necessity of the Fall. It was determined to be a means to an end, even as was reprobation. But he does not teach that Adam represented only the reprobate, much less does he advocate any queer 'Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit' doctrine which biologically divides Adam's heirs.

Fourthly, we have made occasional references to the actual-virtual scheme, usually when Gill himself explicitly employs it. We may speculate on his views a bit further. The Covenant of Grace was actually made in Eden. It was but decreed in eternity, so one may say that it was virtual in eternity. Or one could turn it around in the historical repetition of it in Adam's posterity and say that as it was actual with Adam, so it is virtual (federal) with his posterity. This compares with original versus actual sin. All men are sinners both by virtual, Adamic sin and by actual, individual acts of their own. Representation is part of the set-up of the Covenant of Works, and this too is essential to the actual-virtual scheme of Federalism.

Earlier in this thesis we discussed Stoic influences. There appear to be few if any parallels with regard to the Federal scheme as such, though some Platonist similarities have been observed. Indeed there seem to be several crucial differences between Federalism and Stoicism. Federalism is emphatically Trinitarian; Stoicism is pantheistic. The Stoics may have been politically active and some critics may wish to speculate that they advocated some precursor of the 'social contract', but this is unlikely. Certainly they mentioned nothing of an eternal Covenant of Grace (much less one progressively manifested in history) or a Covenant of Works. Gill does not appeal to the Stoics in his

Federalism. His main opponents here were Arminian, not Deist (Epicurean).

As to his methodology, we have shown how Gill's hermeneutics resort to considerable inference, syllogism and imagination in order to prove the existence of both the eternal Covenant of Grace [sic] and the temporal Covenant of Works [sic]. Neither term is explicitly found in Scripture. He also employs typology to a considerable extent, especially with respect to the historical manifestations of the Covenant of Grace. There are also some contradictory statements made, such as whether the Covenant of Works is bilateral between God and Man.

Finally, we once again meet the objection that the Hoeksema school had a different theology concerning the historical development of the covenants, especially with Adam. Hoeksema states that the first three chapters of Genesis say nothing about a Covenant of Works made with Adam.⁵⁶ There was a covenant with Adam, yes,⁵⁷ but it "was not a sort of pact or agreement, did not consist in 'a condition, a promise, and a penalty', but was a living relationship and fellowship between God and him".⁵⁸ It was not therefore a Covenant of Works per se,⁵⁹ but a Covenant of Friendship.⁶⁰ Adam did not merit a reward; it was freely given.⁶¹

Can Hoeksema's views be harmonised with those of historic Federalism and Hyperism? To a small extent we believe they can. The differences are probably greater here than those concerning the Covenant of Grace. It gets back to the definitions of the idea of 'covenant', which Hoeksema holds to mean a relationship of friendship and unconditional promise. Now Hyper-Calvinists agree that in the manifestation of the Covenant of Grace given to Adam there were no conditions. But as to the Covenant before the Fall, Hypers are quick to bring out that Adam's footing was conditional. This could be interpreted as meaning that Adam was neutrally related with God, but few would wish to state it quite

56. IK, vol.II, p.514.

57. See IK, vol.I, pp.102-117.

58. IK, vol.I, p.478.

59. Dogmatics, pp.217-220.

60. IK, vol.I, p.432; Believers, pp.68-83.

61. Believers, pp.66-71.

like that. Rather, they have said that Adam had innocence (negative or virtual) but not holiness or righteousness as such (positive or actual). Hoeksema, however, seems to go beyond this. Adam had a living relationship with God which could in no way be construed as neutral.

Our judgement is that Hoeksema has more in common on this point with Calvin than either Federalism or Hyper-Calvinism had. And yet He shared some concepts with these which are not to be found in Calvin.

I. BAPTISM AND THE COVENANT

A few remarks should be made regarding Gill's Federalism and his view of baptism. Gill was both an ardent Federalist and a staunch supporter of Believer's Baptism. In fact, most other Hyper-Calvinists have been Baptists. This is not to say that all Hyper-Calvinists have been Baptists, much less that all Baptists were Hyper-Calvinists (Fuller, Spurgeon and most others were not). Nor were any of the early Antinomians Baptists (Crisp, Saltmarsh, Eaton et al), though Huehns has correctly shown that the Antinomians tended to be Independents and associated with other non-Episcopal and non-Presbyterian groups like the Baptists, Ranters, Levellers, Familists, etc. Nor is it impossible for a Baptist to be a true Federalist. Some paedo-Baptist Federalists imply that a Baptist Federalist is a contradiction in terms, but this is not true. Historically there have been quite a large number of Baptists who were influential Federalist theologians. There have often appeared books and tracts by Baptists trying to show that Believer's Baptism is not at all incompatible with the distinctive elements of Federalism. Though almost all of the original Federalists were paedo-baptists, their views of baptism differed slightly even amongst themselves and what they had in common did not form an essential part of Federalism. Paedo-baptism and Believer's Baptism both existed before Federalism.

John Gill wrote several tracts and treatises defending Believer's Baptism¹ and in them he often appeals to the nature of the Covenant of Grace. Whether he was correct on his views of baptism, Federalism, and their relation to each other, is not the place of this thesis. We simply intend to point out a few of the differences between Gill's views and those of the majority of Federalists.

Most of Gill's basic arguments for Believer's Baptism are aimed at opposing baptismal regeneration. In his opinion baptism is a sign of a

1. See especially the following: The Ancient Mode of Baptizing; A Defence of the Ancient Mode of Baptizing; The Divine Right of Infant Baptism; The Argument from Apostolic Tradition; Anti-paedobaptism; A Reply to the Defence of the Divine Right of Infant Baptism; Baptism a Divine Commandment; Infant Baptism, A Part and Pillar of Popery (all of the preceding are in S & T, vol.II); A Dissertation Concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes (reprinted in Body, pp.995-1023); Body, pp.896ff. Other Baptist Hyper-Calvinists have written prolifically on the subject, but there is considerable overlap in material. Representative of them is Philpot's treatment in Reviews, vol.II, pp.276-306. On the Antinomian doctrine of paedobaptism, see John Eaton, The True Doctrine and Right Use of Baptism.

person's conversion and of the quickening work of God in manifesting his personal interest in the Covenant of Grace. But baptism is not a means of entering that Covenant, nor is it a seal of having entered it. Several reasons for this are adduced. Firstly, the Covenant is eternal. No temporal act can affect what is eternal. Nothing therefore that a man does can put him into the Covenant. No man puts himself into the Covenant; he is already either in or out of the Covenant. Consequently, no man can put another man into the Covenant. It is a sovereign and eternal act of God alone.² Secondly, it can be shown that believers are in the Covenant before their baptism.³ Thirdly, Old Testament saints were in the Covenant of Grace long before baptism was ever instituted, and if before it then without it.⁴ Fourthly, baptism cannot and does not remove original sin or remove the penalty of breaking the Covenant of Works. Baptism itself is a work and therefore merely an effect and evidence, not a cause, of being in the Covenant of Grace. At conversion one is shown to be in that Covenant. Fifthly, being unbaptized does not prevent one's being in the eternal Covenant, nor does it prevent the manifestation of his Covenant interest.⁵

Two other Baptists bear mentioning here. The first was John Bunyan. He was a Federalist but in his later days revised his views, especially on the atonement. The second was Benjamin Keach, Gill's predecessor and the one most responsible for the Baptist Confession of 1689. That Confession and its accompanying Catechism were both patterned on the Westminster symbols. The main differences were concerning the sacraments and church government. Neither Bunyan nor Keach were Hyper-Calvinists. They wrote at length defending Believer's Baptism in the light of the Covenant of Grace, but it is strange that Gill appeals only

2. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.414, 262-263, 340.

3. S & T¹, vol.II, p.262.

4. S & T¹, vol.II, p.262. Gadsby noted that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Gospel and not of the Law. See Works, vol.I, pp.251, 253. This is important in understanding the Gospel Standard aspect of Strict Communion.

5. S & T¹, vol.II, p.349. One of Gill's opponents seems to have thought that Gill believed that Baptism causes justification. See Eltringham, The Baptist Against the Baptist, pp.5ff. The fullest Hyper-Calvinist work against baptismal regeneration is William Palmer, The History and Mystery of Baptismal Regeneration. This Palmer should not be confused with the Palmers of the same name who advocated Tractarianism and baptismal regeneration. Occasionally Eaton sounded like he taught baptismal regeneration (e.g., Honeycombe, pp.31, 49, 150, 155), but these statements must be interpreted in the light of his Calvinistic paedobaptism and literary style.

Keach and that only sparingly.

Keach spoke of a 'Baptismal Covenant' but this refers to the believer's pledge of faith at the time of his baptism.⁶ It does not imply either paedobaptism or baptismal regeneration. Gill, however, was loath to use such an expression and we never find it in his writings.

So much for baptismal regeneration. That position was dismissed as thoroughly unscriptural and heretical. Gill fought the non-baptismal regenerative paedobaptist position because he felt that it unwittingly opened the door to baptismal regeneration. Yet as strong as his language is, Gill never considered that the paedobaptist Federalists were guilty of gross heresy or were not real Christians. They may have been wrong here but were not in the same camp as the Rom^anists, Deists, Socinians or even Arminians. Therefore we can conclude that Gill considered baptism to be of secondary importance.

A major argument put forth by Gill is that "There is nothing peculiar to the infants of believers" so far as Covenant interest is concerned.⁷ He attempts to trace this historically. Even the Covenant of Works with Adam stated no provision either way for the offspring for the believers.⁸ How much more, then, concerning the Covenant of Grace. The idea of family covenants pertains particularly to the Abrahamic Covenant but only so far as the Covenant of Works is concerned in the mixture. The family covenant of Abraham was a national covenant, not a manifestation of the Covenant of Grace except in a typological and spiritual sense. Family relations and covenants have never had any bearing on the manifestation of the interest of any individual in the Covenant of Grace.⁹

Paedobaptist Federalists usually compare baptism with circumcision. This itself is based on a comparison of the Abrahamic family covenant with that of a believing parent under the New Covenant dispensation. Now Gill admits that some aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant is called

6. Keach, Marrow, pp.13-14. Brekel, an opponent of Gill, argued for a 'covenant of baptism' from classic paedobaptist principles (Paedo-baptism, p.4).

7. S & T¹, vol.II, p.339.

8. S & T¹, vol.II, p.339. There was neither sign nor seal to this covenant (p.350).

9. S & T¹, vol.II, p.470.

the Covenant of Circumcision. It is so called because of its token, the act of circumcision.¹⁰ But this was only a 'sign' or 'token' and not a 'seal' of it in its relation to the manifestation of the Covenant of Grace, for it "did not seal or confirm any spiritual blessing of the covenant".¹¹ Therefore, Gill argues, baptism is but the sign and not the seal of the New Covenant. The Holy Spirit, not baptism, is the seal.¹² The Spirit's baptism is the seal of the manifestation of a person's interest in the Covenant of Grace, for the Covenant is spiritual and not earthly.

Another argument runs along similar lines. Circumcision related only to Abraham's physical descendants. They were only Jews and not Gentiles. Gill picked up on this and further asserted that, as not all of Abraham's physical descendants are in the Covenant of Grace, neither are all the physical offspring of believers under the New Covenant dispensation.¹³ A believing parent has no assurance whatsoever that his child is in the Covenant of Grace or that such an interest will be manifested. Since baptism is a sign of the manifestation of one's covenant interest, it is presumptuous for believing parents to baptize their children until faith is manifested.

Circumcision related only to the earthly side of Abraham's Covenant, both in blessings and heirs. In that sense the Covenant could be passed on to children by physical means. But this was only the national covenant. There is no physical national covenant as such under the New Covenant dispensation. The spiritual aspect of Abraham's Covenant did, in fact, relate to the Covenant of Grace but could be transmitted (if we can use the term) only by spiritual means, which only the Holy Spirit can do.¹⁴ The fact that in the New Covenant there is no difference between Jew and Gentile negates the possibility of family-covenants with regard to the Covenant of Grace. Gill even suggests that a consistent paedobaptist would be obliged to baptize the children of unbelieving Gentiles, for "God oftentimes takes the one, and leaves the other".¹⁵

10. Comm on Gen. 17:2. Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.191.

11. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.286-287.

12. Body, p.905; S & T¹, vol.II, pp.301, 350; Comm on Rom. 4:11.

13. S & T¹, vol.II, p.285.

14. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.282, 285.

15. S & T¹, vol.II, p.285.

Furthermore, circumcision was not a type of baptism because there is no similarity whatever between the two, as is the case in all types and antitypes.¹⁶ This raises the question of the hermeneutics of baptism on both sides. Gill appeals to the 'plain sense' of Scripture in asserting that Scripture nowhere explicitly commands infant baptism, nor do we find any examples of such in Scripture.¹⁷ On the other hand, we find both command and examples of infant circumcision. Some paedobaptist Federalists have replied that this is so but add that neither do we find any explicit prohibitions of infant baptism. This is an argumentum e silentio and is not often employed. Gill represents the Baptist Federalist position in stating that the burden of proof rests upon paedobaptists to prove that Scripture shows that there need not be any explicit command or example in the one when there are both in the other.

A word should be said at this point about the term 'Strict Baptist'. The position is described as follows:

... those only can scripturally sit down to the Lord's Supper who, upon their profession of faith, have been baptised by immersion in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and that, therefore, what is called 'Mixed Communion' is unscriptural, improper, and not to be allowed in the churches of Christ.¹⁸

Hence, the term 'Strict' is an abbreviation of 'Restricted'.¹⁹ This is more than saying that the only eligible candidates for the Supper are those who have given evidence of regeneration. Most paedobaptist Federalists have accepted that (witness the controversy with Edwards and Halfway Covenants). Rather, this view states that the only acceptable partakers are those who have given evidence of regeneration and have

16. Comm on Rom. 4:11. Cf. Chapter II.

17. So too Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.70; Gosden, Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper, p.13.

18. Gospel Standard Article XV. A good exposition of Strict Communion is J.H. Gosden, Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. According to Strict Baptists, even John Calvin himself could not be admitted to the Table - nor Huntington, Owen, Goodwin, Hoeksema, Luther, Crisp, Hussey, Irons, Toplady, or Whitefield!

19. Styles, Guide, p.196. Cf. pp.258-259. On the term 'Strict Baptists', see Abraham Booth, Works, vol.II, pp.499-509. Booth, it may be recalled, wrote what has probably remained the most extensive defence of Believer's Baptism, his three-volumed Paedobaptism Examined.

been baptised by immersion (and immersion only) after a profession of faith. This has not been the accepted view with all Baptists (e.g., Bunyan), but almost all Hyper-Calvinists have taught Strict Communion.²⁰ Is there any reason why most Hypers have been Strict, and most Strict Baptists have been Hyper?

We believe that there is. Note that the Strict position is aimed at limiting the number of acceptable applicants as far as possible. In Scotland a similar procedure called 'fencing the Table' has occurred within paedobaptist churches which are virtually Hyper-Calvinist. In Chapter VIII we will see how Hyper-Calvinists place undue restrictions upon the Gospel. In neither instance does one get the impression that they are overly concerned about whether men come - they seem to be more concerned that certain persons do not come.

Not all Baptist Hyper-Calvinists and certainly not all Baptists in general have been so emphatic on Believer's Baptism. Take the case of A.W. Pink. He wrote, "I do not regard it as in anywise a vital matter, and it ought never to disrupt or even disturb Christian fellowship..."²¹ (The same view was held by Craner.²²) This is provocative coming as it does from Pink. It is significant that as prolific an author as he was, Pink never wrote a substantial treatise on Baptism. His works cover other matters concerning personal sanctification and he did treat the subject in a few places in passing. Pink's call for moderation, we

20. A few have not been Strict, such as John Grace (Recollections, pp.96-97). The Gospel Standard Strict Baptists are so emphatic of maintaining their distinctive doctrines that they reprove and discipline any member who knowingly receives the Lord's Supper at any church which is not in full agreement with the Gospel Standard Articles. Conversely, it is expected that everyone who is admitted to the Gospel Standard Table is in full agreement with the Articles. This is, as it were extra Strict Communion! See Gospel Standard Rules, Paragraph 6. Paedobaptist Hyper-Calvinists, of course, are not 'Strict'. They may be 'Closed' in that they do not admit those who are under the discipline or another of the same church, nor those who do not give adequate evidence of regeneration. Cf. Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, pp.670-671. There is difference of opinion, though, about admitting children of believers. In other contexts, 'Strict' and 'Closed' are synonymous. Irons considered Strict Communion to be "unscriptural and antichristian" (Jazer, p.79).

21. Letters, p.56. This statement did not appear in print in Pink's lifetime, but similar expressions cropped up in his published works. Without holding to infant baptism, Pink accepted the principle that is generally questioned by Baptists, that there is something special for the children of believers by way of Covenant. "Though we do not believe that Grace runs in the blood, yet we are convinced that, as a general rule ... God does place His elect in families where at least one of the parents loves and seeks to serve Him" (Holy Spirit, p.98).

22. Testimony, p.15. It should be noted that previous to the first half of the eighteenth century, many Independent churches were composed of both paedobaptists and Believer's Baptists.
... Cont'd:

believe, is indicative of his low view of the Church. Note that he also wrote no work on ecclesiology, probably the only locus in systematic theology which he ignored. The first half of Pink's adult life was spent in a number of short pastorates, eventually resigning himself to a solitary life in which he spent the second half of his adult life producing the monthly Studies in the Scriptures and his books. As Iain Murray has shown in his Life of A.W. Pink, Pink eventually ceased all attendance at the Lord's Supper and even public worship.

One wonders if Pink was considering the position taken by a few Hypers before him. This was the theory and practice of non-baptism (or a-baptism). As is well known, the Quakers felt that true baptism was spiritual, with no water involved at all. Contemporary with Fox and Barclay, the Antinomian William Dell formulated a similar doctrine from Calvinistic principles.²³ There is some evidence that John Saltmarsh held this theory at one time as well.²⁴ There is debate whether William Huntington was non-baptistic, though the evidence suggests that he was in favour of infant baptism at least for the majority of his ministry.²⁵ A number of his followers came to accept the non-baptist position, notably Vigors M'Culla, who also came to oppose Huntington on a number of points.²⁶ In turn the view was opposed by mainstream Hyper-Calvinism, notably the Gospel Standard Strict Baptists and especially William Gadsby's son, John Gadsby.²⁷

A few other persons and groups have rejected all forms of water-

Cont'd:...

Such was the church of Gill's parents and a few today.

23. See Dell's tract, 'The Doctrine of Baptism', in Works, pp.375-409, especially pp.392, 398, 404-405.

24. See Sparkles of Glory, pp.21-32, 60-63.

25. See John Gadsby, Memoir of William Gadsby, p.72. Similarly, in more recent days there has been confusion over the views of Lloyd-Jones. The record shows that he was a Baptist. His refusal to make it a divisive issue has made some wonder if he may have been non-baptistic.

26. See especially M'Culla's Error of Water Baptism Exposed. Three other works appeared which took this position: L.D. Byron, The Origin and Nature of Baptism; (Anonymous), The Sacred Bond of Unity; W. Blackley, Is Water Baptism an Institution of Christ? Cf. Styles, Guide, pp.153, 174.

27. He wrote three works against the theory: An Antidote. Being a Refutation of the Dogma that Water-Baptism Ought to Have Ended at Pentecost; Baptism (second edition); Truth Established and False Charges Exposed.

baptism from different perspectives. The Salvation Army does not practice either Baptism or Communion but this is more because of their distinctive ecclesiology rather than a theology that only Spirit-baptism is valid. E.W. Bullinger, Charles Baker and other Ultra-Dispensation-
alists have argued that water-baptism was only valid for the first generation of Christians. That is, it was instituted as a testimony to national Israel; when the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 God ceased all Covenantal dealings with Israel and therefore water-baptism ceased.²⁸ In a few rare cases some others have rejected water-baptism because of an extreme view of Christ's alleged vicarious baptism by John the Baptist. This has some things in common with the views of the Antinomians and MacLeod Campbell, but most who emphasize Christ's vicarious baptism also teach that there is still a valid use of water-baptism. Most who believe in Christ's vicarious baptism have been paedobaptists, but R.T. Kendall is one Baptist who teaches it. And in none of the forms of non-baptism or vicarious baptism is there any sympathy with the Mormon doctrine of 'Baptism for the Dead', which is based upon the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

There have been, of course, more than a few paedobaptist Hyper-Calvinists. As a matter of fact, the first two Hypers (Hussey and Davis) were believers in infant baptism. Irons, Bradbury and Atherton were as well, and almost certainly William Huntington. Most prominent, however, has been the school of Herman Hoeksema (including Homer Hoeksema, Herman Hanko, David Engelsma and George Ophoff).²⁹ Hoeksema's views on baptism do not substantially differ from the Federalist views of, say, Charles Hodge but they do have some significant differences with Hyperist Baptists' position so far as the Covenants are concerned. Hoeksema held that "Infant baptism is not a matter of lesser importance, but of the greatest moment".³⁰ That water-baptism replaced circumcision as a sign of the Covenant is essential to the Reformed faith,³¹ but the main argument for paedobaptism is "that

28. There are variations in this view, as with all others we mention. Some recent advocates have reconsidered their position in the light of Israel becoming a nation again in 1948. Then there is the matter of baptism in the Great Tribulation immediately preceding the Millenium.

29. See especially the following by Hoeksema: Believers and Their Seed; Biblical Grounds for the Baptism of Infants; Dogmatics, pp.669-700; IK, vol.II, pp.465-553.

30. Believers, p.85.

31. Believers, p.84.

God causes His covenant to run in the line of continued generations".³² Thusly, God regenerates the elect seed of His church in infancy, implanting in them faith which develops gradually.³³ And yet Hoeksema took issue with Kuyper on whether all (Kuyper) or some (Hoeksema) infants of believers are regenerated in this manner. He emphatically rejected the idea of 'presumptive regeneration' for, among other reasons, it too closely approached a doctrine of baptismal regeneration.³⁴

What about baptism and the preaching of the Word? Hoeksema felt that children of believers are to be instructed in the Scriptures gradually. But in no case whatsoever is there an 'offer' of grace in Baptism or the Lord's Supper.³⁵ In this he agrees with the Strict Baptists. But he strongly objected to the Baptists on other grounds. Baptists, he felt, employed only a few isolated tests of Scripture³⁶ and ignore the basic truth of family covenants.³⁷ Baptists are pseudo-Calvinists.³⁸

One may well ask why it is that the great majority of Hyper-Calvinists have been Baptists. One reason is simply because of the charismatic personalities of men such as Gill, Gadsby and Wells. But it would not be fair to say that they were simply the right men at the right time in the right place. Bearing in mind that Hyperism originated within paedobaptist ranks, we feel that there are some reasons why it has prospered more with Baptists. One reason has to do with the doctrine of faith. That is, since Baptists rule out infant faith, they demand a credible profession of faith to describe one's own personal conversion, generally in Experimental terms. Even the excesses of Philpot's Experimentalism³⁹ rejects the idea accepted by more than a few

32. Believers, p.94.

33. Believers, p.134; IK, vol.I, p.328; vol.II, pp.434-435.

34. Cf. Believers, pp.34-57, 146-159; IK, vol.II, p.441.

35. Believers, p.140.

36. Believers, pp.58, 84.

37. Similarly Hoeksema associates Pre-millennialism with the rejection of infant baptism, for both schemes contend that God has two peoples. See IK, vol.II, pp.529-530.

38. Engelsma: "Of late, certain Baptists have taken it upon themselves to give us instruction in the history of Reformed theology, alleging that Calvin, the Reformers, and the Reformed creeds teach the offer and charging that it is 'the opposers of the historic Reformed position' who deny the offer" (Hyper-Calvinism, p.72). In particular he cites Erroll Hulse's The Free Offer. It is not difficult to discern a degree of animosity against Baptists here. We grant that the Reformers and more than a few of the Puritans shared this animosity; but those such as Engelsma

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paedobaptists that faith gradually rises up within an individual from infancy. Consequently, a Baptist Hyper examines a profession of faith a little differently than does a paedobaptist, even a Hyper like Hoeksema. These Baptists closely examine marks of grace in an individual's life and try to determine whether he is regenerate or not.

But, one might ask, do not the non-Hyper Baptists do the same? Do not they stress the need for adult conversion and marks of grace? Yes, most certainly. But the difference is related to evangelism in the light of the sovereignty/responsibility balance. Those who emphasize human responsibility will stress personal conversion in a substantially different manner than those who emphasize divine sovereignty. Or, to put it another way, the one seems more intent on winning as many souls to the Saviour as possible while the other appears to be fencing the Gospel as much as possible for fear that, as Spurgeon put it, one of the non-elect might get converted. Baptists are well known for their aggressiveness. This aggressiveness has been a great help to evangelism and the missionary movement,⁴⁰ but it has also spurred on the anti-missionary movement as well.⁴¹ The one is aggressively offensive and positive, the other aggressively defensive and negative.

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reveal that they are in need of instruction as to what the position of the Reformers and the Reformed creeds are concerning the free offer and limited atonement, among other doctrines. Likewise, these sort of Hyper-Calvinists display considerable ignorance of Baptist doctrine at times. But to give them their due, we grant that there has been equal enmity and ignorance concerning Reformed paedobaptism by more than a few Baptists. Irons and Bradbury were often content to work in a friendly manner with Baptist Hypers, but they stood out in this aspect. On the same score, few Baptist Hypers have shared Pink's willingness to grant liberty to paedobaptist Hyper-Calvinists.

39. See Chapter VII, Section B.

40. There have been almost certainly more Baptists involved in the foreign missions movement than any other single group. This is not to say, however, that paedobaptists have not been actively involved in evangelism. See Chapter VIII.

41. The rise of the Gospel Standard Baptists in England and the Primitive Baptists in America can almost precisely be gauged to the growth of the Missionary Movement. They are, in fact, parallel - anti-missions and pro-missions. The Primitive Baptists are especially anti-missions (see Chapter VIII).

CHAPTER VI

JUSTIFICATION

A. DEFINITION OF JUSTIFICATION

John Gill held that the doctrine of justification is of the absolute essence of Biblical Christianity. It is "the principal" and "grand doctrine of the Gospel", "the article by which the church stands or falls".¹ Being a Federalist, he saw it mainly in terms of the eternal Covenant of Grace in this way:

Justification is ... provided in this Covenant. Jehovah the Father appointed this work unto his Son, which he agreed to, even to bring in everlasting righteousness; and God promised that he should justify many upon the foot of that righteousness, and as a Covenant God he does do it.²

Hence, justification is Trinitarian.³ But just what is justification

1. S & T¹, vol.I, pp.122-123; vol.II, p.61; Comm on Isa 59:4, Dan. 12:3. This has always been the Reformed view. See Heppes, p.543; Traill, Works, vol.I, p.298; Popham, Sermons, vol.IV, p.7; Styles, Guide, p.46; Pink, Sermon on the Mount, p.367. There is a plethora of literature relevant to our investigation. There were three main Antinomian works on justification written in the Puritan era: William Eyre, Vindiciae Justificationis Gratuitae; John Eaton, The Discovery of the Most Dangerous Dead Faith; and especially Eaton's massive The Honeycombe of Free Justification. Gill's views are found mainly in Body, pp.501-518; the relevant places in the Commentary; and especially in The Doctrine of Justification (DJ). Brine wrote four works: Vindication, pp.207-252; A Defence of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification (EJ); The Imputation of Christ's Active Obedience to His People; and The Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, and the Imputation of His Righteousness to His People. See also the following: John Johnson, Riches, vol.II, pp.3-98; Huntington, Works, vol.IV, pp.1-284; vol.XV, pp.185-206; Stevens, The Words of Truth, pp.120-125; Allen, The Spiritual Magazine, vol.II, pp.148-161; Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.I, pp.457-468; Thomas Bradbury, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.I, pp.313-336; Justification; Styles, Guide, pp.44-53; Manual, pp.59-68; Pink, The Doctrine of Reconciliation; The Doctrines of Election and Justification; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.493-519; TK, vol.II, pp.317-365. Chauncey's anti-Neonomian views are found in Neonomianism Unmasked, Part II, pp.227-253. On Twisse and Antinomianism, see John Graile, A Modest Vindication of the Doctrine of Conditions in the Covenant of Grace. Published with A Preface Concerning the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, Wherein is a Discovery of the Judgement of Dr. Twisse in the Point of Justification, Clearing Him from Antinomianism Therein. For the history of the Reformed doctrine, in addition to Heppes, see Buchanan, Justification; and Edward Boehl, The Reformed Doctrine of Justification.

2. S & T², vol.II, p.101.

3. "The Father contrived it; the Son procured it, and the Spirit applies it" (DJ, pp.11-12). Cf. Body, p.505.

itself? In one place Gill gives a succinct definition which seems to be in full harmony with mainstream Protestantism:

Justification is an act of God's free grace, whereby he clears his people from sin, discharges them from condemnation, and reckons and accounts them righteous for the sake of Christ's righteousness, which he accepted of, and imputes unto them.⁴

This closely parallels the famous definition in the Westminster Longer Catechism (Question 70). That Gill here omits all mention of faith does not mean that faith has no relation at all to justification. As we shall see later, however, Gill's view of justification by faith puts less emphasis on faith than did that of the Reformers and Puritan Federalists. For Gill, faith was not of the very marrow of justification itself but only a byproduct of it; hence its omission from the above definition.

Dr. Gill was not unique in holding that justification is not to be found in the Covenant of Works⁵ or through baptism.⁶ It is to be found only in the Covenant of Grace and is one of the chief blessings of election, though not to be confused with the other blessings. It is not the same thing as adoption.⁷ Adoption is also eternal and Covenantal but is the greatest blessing of all. Justification is perhaps best described in its relation to election and pardon. Justification "may well be considered as a branch of election".⁸ Both election and justification are immanent and eternal acts, and "As God's will to elect, is the election of his people, so his will to justify them is the justification of them".⁹ Justification is the choice or "resolution in his mind"¹⁰ to pardon the sins of the elect and to impute Christ's righteousness to them. It is therefore the bridge between election and pardon. It

4. DJ, pp.7-8. Other definitions are found in Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.65; Irons, Jazer, p.39 (cf. pp.38-43); J.C. Ryland, Sr., A Body of Divinity, pp.27-28; Hale, Catechism, p.48; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, pp.146-147; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, p.493; IK, vol. II, p.320; and Article VII of the Gospel Standard Articles of Faith (see Appendix).

5. S & T², vol.II, p.91, and elsewhere.

6. As he had been falsely charged by Eltringham, The Baptist Against the Baptist, pp.5ff.

7. Body, p.519.

8. Body, p.205. Cf. Comm on I Peter 1:2; DJ, pp.48-50.

9. Body, p.203. This is nearly verbatim in DJ, p.48. Cf. also Body, p.206; Clipsham, p.104.

10. S & T², vol.II, p.136.

includes pardon but Gill draws an important distinction between the two. Pardon is merely the 'non-imputation of sins' (forgiveness) whereas justification is the 'imputation of righteousness' and the completion of pardon.¹¹ It is somewhat unexpected that he contends that

... according to the order of causes, justification by the righteousness of Christ, imputed, may be considered as before pardon; since God forgives sin for Christ's sake; that is, for the sake of his righteousness imputed.¹²

This all transpires in the eternal mind of God. This 'order of causes' follows the 'point of logic' (apex logicus) motif which we have noticed before. Pardon is eternal. Justification is eternal. So, indeed is salvation itself.¹³ However, Gill refrains from saying that calling is eternal, even though it is placed before justification in the ordo salutis of Romans 8:30.¹⁴ Thus in some sense justification precedes calling.¹⁵ The hermeneutical difficulties are obvious, and Low Calvinists and Arminians cite this as an example of theological eisegesis.

Neither is justification to be equated in all points with reconciliation, even though that too is eternal.¹⁶ Reconciliation implies that God had a temporal enmity with the elect; but in point of fact, since they are eternally elected and justified God never had enmity against them.¹⁷ The problems of this view are also apparent. If God never had enmity with the elect, how can he ever be said either to

11. Body p.503; Comm on Acts 13:39; DJ, p.2. Cf. Styles, Manual, p.64. Hazelton: "Divine justification always includes pardon, but all pardon does not necessarily include justification" (Sermons, vol.IV, p.170). Stockell: "In a strict and proper sense, the infinite God doth not forgive sin", for our debt is paid and need not be forgiven. In another sense, God forgives sin by Christ (God Himself) paying the debt. See Redeemer's Glory, pp.157-160. Pink says God is justified but not pardoned (Election and Justification, p.195). On eternal forgiveness and Twisse, see Gill, DJ, pp.56-57, 65.

12. Body, p.501.

13. Comm on Rom. 8:24; Philpot, Sermons, vol.IX, p.125.

14. Comm on Rom. 8:30.

15. Brine, EJ, p.66.

16. S & T¹, vol.II, p.74; Comm on II Cor. 5:19; Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, p.517. On reconciliation, see especially Pink, Reconciliation.

17. S & T¹, vol.II, p.74. Cf. Bedford, p.30. Occasionally Hypers have differed over the acceptability of the term 'a reconciled God'. To some it implies that God was in the wrong, or at least out of order (cf. impassibility). To others it speaks of propitiation and appeasement.

justify or pardon them, or even to be reconciled with them? One reply is that they are reconciled to God, not that he is reconciled to them. But did not God have wrath against them? What is the place of the atonement in justification? Atonement is a temporal act and cannot be the cause of justification, which is eternal. Well, then, what about the decree covering atonement? It is dealt with according to the Supralapsarian scheme. Atonement follows justification in the ordo salutis of the decrees, for the atonement precedes justification in time (for the order of history is the opposite of that of the decrees).

This is the reasoning of Supralapsarianism. Even though Gill states that justification affects sinners as sinners,¹⁸ it must be remembered that there are two aspects of justification even as there are in Supralapsarian election. That is, as election is from the pure mass but necessitates the Fall, so there is a dichotomy in justification. This is the 'active and passive' dichotomy, which seems to be borrowed from Hoornbeck. Active justification is eternal, immanent and proper; it corresponds to election from the pure mass. Passive justification is temporal, transient and improper; it corresponds with the decree to allow the elect to fall yet remain elected through it.¹⁹ Only in passive justification does God deal with the elect as sinners.

To be sure, Gill stresses that, properly speaking, only active justification can be spoken of as justification. This is his regular emphasis and the foundation of his defence of eternal justification. Justification "entirely resides in the divine mind"²⁰ and "is but one and done at once, and admits of no degrees, and is not carried on in a gradual way, as sanctification is".²¹ Since it is "a complete act in God's eternal mind", the elect "may be said to be perfect with respect to their justification".²² This is bold language and requires much

18. Body, pp.507, 517.

19. CAE, vol.I, pp.91-92 note; DJ, pp.42-43; Body, p.203. Cf. Palmer, Epitome, pp.19-20; Heppe, pp.555-559.

20. Body, p.203. Cf. DJ, p.48; Brine, EJ, p.15.

21. Body, p.517. Crisp: "justification is an act of God at once ... how can it be successive?" (CAE, vol.I, p.297). So too Eaton, Honeycombe, often; Pink, Election and Justification, p.252; Allen, The Spiritual Magazine, vol.II, p.158. Even Hoeksema accepted this viewpoint: "justification is not a process, but a complete act of God" (Dogmatics, p.520). Cf. IK, vol.II, pp.322-323.

22. DJ, p.59; S & T¹, vol.I, p.507. Eaton often spoke of this justification as perfect and complete, but his language was not always guarded and he is easily misunderstood, as are most

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clarification. Fortunately Gill and the others provide a large amount of material from which to gather explanations.

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Antinomians on many issues. Philpot: "the salvation of every member of the mystical body of Christ is as complete now as it will be in eternity to come" (Sermons, vol.IX, p.142). Cf. Popham Sermons, vol.I, p.262.

B. JUSTIFICATION BY IMPUTATION

A few words should be said here on the nature of justification by the imputation of righteousness. Gill followed mainstream Protestantism in maintaining that justification is by imputed rather than by infused righteousness, which was the position of Rome, most Socinians and many Arminians. The main disagreement, however, was with Rome; the disagreement with Arminianism was mostly with regard to the time of justification and its relation to faith (see the following two section). Contrary to the opinions of some critics,¹ Gill did not have any fundamental disagreement with the Reformers over the nature of imputation.

It was the opinion of some seventeenth and eighteenth century divines that the doctrine of justification by imputed righteousness constituted or led to doctrinal Antinomianism. This was the view of Jeremy Taylor, Herbert Thorndike, Henry Hammond, George Bull, Edward Fowler and Marie Fleury.² This is hardly correct. A number of Federalists held to justification by imputation who can in no way be considered doctrinal Antinomians. In fact, this would include by far the greater number of Reformers as well as Puritan Federalists. On the other hand, some claim that the Antinomians held to justification by infused righteousness. But we shall also see that the Antinomians also held to justification by imputation rather than by infusion.

How did Gill define 'imputation'? To impute is "to reckon, repute, estimate, attribute, or place any thing to the account of another".³ The use of 'account' here is typical of Gill and may sound economic or fiscal,⁴ but in fact he uses it more in a legal sense. 'Imputation' is a legal and forensic term and as such is contrasted with a physical sense.⁵ It is a sentence,⁶ a resolution⁷ and an act (especially a moral

1. E.g., Buchanan, The Doctrine of Justification, pp.158-159. Cf. Heppe, pp.548-550.

2. According to Allison (p.212) and Fleury (p.17). Cf. Kevan, p.144. See Chapter X below.

3. DJ, p.32. For other definitions, see Gadsby, Sermons, p.177; Stevens, The Words of Truth, pp.114-115; Parks, A Sunday-School Dictionary, p.29; J.C. Ryland, Sr., Contemplations, vol.I, p.281; Hawker, Works, vol.VI, pp.422-424.

4. So also, for example, in Body, pp.203, 208-209; S & T¹, vol.II, p.179; DJ, pp.7-8, 48, 59.

5. Body, p.503; Cause, p.37; Comm on Rom. 3:20.

6. E.g., Body, p.517; Cause, p.37; S & T¹, vol.II, p.61; Comm on Rom. 5:1.

7. E.g., S & T¹, vol.II, p.136.

act)⁸ in which God pronounces, esteems, considers, reckons, views, declares and constitutes men righteous,⁹ "according to law, as though he had never sinned".¹⁰ It is a Federal term and Gill uses it in some other respects, such as the imputation of Adam's sin, but it is especially employed when discussing justification.

As we noted in the previous section, Gill felt that pardon and justification are different things, though both are acts of imputation in complementary ways. Gill: "Pardon lies in the non-imputation of sin; justification in the imputation of righteousness; righteousness is imputed, but pardon is not".¹¹ Imputed righteousness is the foundation of the non-imputation of sin, and therefore justification precedes pardon, according to 'the order of causes'. Justification is also the greater of the two.¹² Note the following extract:

... in pardon the man is considered as a sinner, in justification as a righteous man; pardon takes away his sin, justification gives him a righteousness; pardon frees from punishment, but justification besides that gives him a title to eternal life; to pardon, the blood of Christ is sufficient; but to justification are required the holiness of Christ's nature, the perfect obedience of his life, as well as his sufferings of death.¹³

'Imputation' is also used in relation to original sin. The way in which Adam's sin becomes the sin of his descendants is the same way in which Christ's righteousness becomes the righteousness of His people.¹⁴ So too, "The same way that our sins became Christ's, his righteousness becomes ours".¹⁵ Gill's order of decrees in eternity would

8. E.g., S & T¹, vol.II, p.140, 7-8; Body, p.203; DJ, pp.48, 65-67.

9. E.g., DJ, pp.4, 7-8, 48; S & T¹, vol.I, p.61; Body, pp.208-209; Cause, p.37; Comm on Acts 13:39.

10. DJ, p.4.

11. Body, p.503. Cf. S & T¹, vol.II, p.140.

12. Body, p.501.

13. Comm on Acts 13:39.

14. Body, pp.514-515; Comm on Romans 5; Brine, Imputation, p.23; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.315; Samuel Crisp, in CAE, vol.I, p.xix; Hale, Catechism, p.49; Palmer, Epitome, p.19. Cf. Bedford, p.29.

15. DJ, p.34. So too DJ, p.67; Body, pp.207, 515; S & T¹, vol.II, p.140; James Barry, Only Refuge, p.75; Styles, John Hazelton: A Memoir, p.171; Manual, p.60; Hale, Catechism, pp.49-50; Stockell, Scripture and Reason, p.39; Palmer, Epitome, p.19; Pink, Beatitudes, p.33. This transaction is called 'the double imputation' by Popham, Sermons, vol.IV, p.205; Windridge, p.223; and Pink, Godhead, p.175. On the analogy, see Brine's two works: The Imputation of

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then seem to be thus: God decreed to permit Adam to sin, to impute Adam's sin to his offspring, to impute the sin of the elect to Christ, to impute Christ's righteousness to the elect, and to forgive their sins (i.e., not to impute them to the elect). But the difficulty is immediately obvious. Elsewhere Gill asserts that the order of the decrees in eternity is Supralapsarian, though the order of their enactment in time is Sublapsarian. What is last in time is first in intention and decree. This reverses the order and confuses things. If justification precedes pardon in eternity, it must follow pardon in time. Would Gill reverse the above order in time? No, for the above order is obviously that of time rather than of eternity. If this is so, Gill is forced to reverse the order entirely in eternity, viz: decree to pardon, to impute Christ's righteousness, to impute the elect's sin to Christ, to impute the sin of Adam to mankind, to allow the Fall. But this is also contradictory, for it places pardon before justification, which he cannot accept even in the Supralapsarian scheme. The only solution is for Gill to assert that justification precedes pardon in eternity but follows it in time, for that would be more consistent with the Supralapsarian scheme. It must be remembered in all this that the reversal of the order is 'a point of logic'. A number of Low Calvinists and Arminians claim that it is nonsense precisely because it follows logic rather than Scripture.

It does not end there. If the historical order is Adam, Christ, elect, then the order in eternity is elect, Christ, Adam. (This, of course, deals only with the elect after Christ, though some lived in the Old Covenant dispensation). But Gill contends that the elect are justified in eternity because of Christ's engagements in the Covenant regarding atonement. Would the order then be Christ, elect, Adam or Christ, Adam, elect? Such meticulous details are typical of Federalist discussions over the ordo salutis and the problems are especially apparent when the historical order of time is in any way altered in eternity. Gill does not explicitly state his final opinion about the order as it relates to the imputation of Adam's sin to men, the elect's sin to Christ, and Christ's righteousness to the elect. The problem is further complicated by his rigid particularism which divides the recipients of Adam's sin and Christ's righteousness and omits the limitation of the instrumentality of

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Christ's Active Obedience to His People; and The Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin of Christ, and the Imputation of His Righteousness to His People. See Chapter IX below.

faith. Gill's overall positions makes a final construction of the order nearly impossible.

Further complicating this are his views about the active and passive obedience of Christ. We will examine this yet further in our chapter on limited atonement, but here we must call attention to the relation of this dichotomy to the imputation of righteousness. Gill maintains that it is not the inherent (essential, intrinsic) righteousness of Christ that is imputed. It is "that which consists of what is commonly called his active and passive obedience".¹⁶ But he goes on to state that the distinction between active and passive righteousness is not accurate, for obedience is not really passive, nor were Christ's sufferings and death to be considered obedience as such – they were the effects of previous obedience both in heaven and on earth.¹⁷ What is imputed, then? Christ's merits and His person.

This problem was not new to Gill. Earlier Federalists such as Piscator and Rutherford had wrestled with the dilemma. If men are justified by Christ's active obedience to the Law, it appears that men are justified without regard to the cross. If so, what do we do with Romans 5:9, "justified by his blood?" And if we are justified by His passive obedience in His submitting to the cross, what is to be made of Romans 5:19, "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"? Consequently, some Federalists have held that justification is based only on the one, others say based on the other. Most, however, say that justification is founded upon both. Gill takes this line as well but, as with so many other things, he feels compelled to add a few clarifications lest he be mistaken for agreeing with Arminians (some of whom accepted justification by the imputation of Christ's active and passive righteousness). Firstly, he pushes it all into eternity; secondly, he says that what Christ did on earth was not the real obedience upon which we are justified. Justification is founded entirely upon what occurred in eternity. As for Christ's righteousness, it appears that men were justified on the basis of the righteousness decreed in the Covenant. This was shown in the first quotation in our first section above.

16. DJ, pp.18-19. Cf. Comm on Acts 13:39; DJ, pp.21ff; Hussey, Glory, pp.271, 276; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.75-76; Rogers, in Bentley, Helper, p.54.

17. DJ, pp.19-20.

Gill does not, as one might otherwise expect, say that the dichotomy of justification matches the dichotomy of Christ's obedience. That is, he does not say that active justification in eternity is based on Christ's active obedience on earth, nor that passive justification in time is based on Christ's passive obedience. Rather, both active and passive justification are based on Christ's active and passive obedience, as held by most Federalists. But to be more precise, active justification is based upon Christ's surety engagements in the Eternal Covenant. Passive justification is based on active justification and therefore also on His surety engagements in the Covenant. Similarly, neither active nor passive justification is really based on Christ's actual active and passive obedience, for His actual obedience was in time and nothing in time can be the cause of what transpired in eternity. Hence, active justification is based on His virtual obedience (i.e., His surety engagements in the Covenant). And of course, passive justification must also be based upon His virtual obedience, for it is based on active obedience, which is based on His virtual obedience. One notes a vast network of syllogisms and dichotomies in his complicated explanation.

Another interesting problem arose with earlier Antinomianism. Crisp was wont to use literal terms for figurative ones, and this practice raised cries of alarm with regard to justification. In his many sermons on II Cor. 5:21 in CAE he often sounds as if he taught that Christ was literally made sin and that believers are literally made righteous. This is non-Federal language and seems to deny the idea of imputation altogether. It implies that the elect's sins were not imputed to Christ but infused into Him and that His righteousness was not imputed to them but infused into them. Now Gill himself sounded a little like this at times. For example, in one place he says that "they are made righteous by it" but he immediately adds "by imputation".¹⁸ Indeed, Scripture

18. Body, pp.514-515. On the point in question, cf. Thornton, pp.215-216; and Chapter IX. Dell (e.g., p.276) and Eaton (e.g., pp.22-23) often sounded as if they believed in justification by infusion rather than mere imputation. Cudworth, who reprinted the works of several Antinomians, rejected the differentiation of imputed and imparted righteousness. See his Some Reasons, p.14. This is probably due to his contact with the Moravians. Some Low Calvinists suggest that justification includes both imputation and infusion in that the infusion stage concerns the necessary sanctification that flows from imputation. This seems to have been the view of Baxter, but more recent Low Calvinists are influenced by Campbell and refer it to the analogy of how Christ was made sin by imputation and infusion. See Chapter IX, Sections A and D.

sometimes says that believers are "made righteous" (II Cor. 5:21, Romans 5:19) and that Christ was "made to be sin" (II Cor. 5:21). Crisp, however, was simply using such language for effect. As we shall see in our chapter on limited atonement, Crisp stringently denied that Christ was literally (actually) made sin. Christ was not somehow metamorphosed into sin, for He remained Christ Himself. Nor was sin physically or otherwise infused into Him.

Furthermore, Crisp accepted the dictum that we are justified in the same way that our sins became Christ's and in the way that Adam's sin became ours. To this writer's knowledge, no Federalist has ever argued that this dictum is not true. Nobody, for example, argues that our sins literally (in all respects) became Christ's but His righteousness only figuratively became ours. Neither has anyone suggested that we are punished for Adam's sin as such, but only as it is ours by imputation. Romanism, however, teaches that our sins were imputed to Christ and that His righteousness is infused into us, but this is not Federalist. Some traducianists, on the other hand, seem to teach that men are not punished because of the imputation of Adam's sin, for that would be unjust, but that are punished for original sin because they were actually and physically in the loins of Adam when he sinned. Some say Augustine taught this. But Crisp was a Federalist and thus denied that Christ was actually made sin, and further denied that men are justified because of the infusion of His righteousness. It appears, however, that he was not satisfied with the legal language of mainstream Federalism. Kendall says that Crisp and Cotton were offshoots of Federalism which show more influence from Calvin than from the prominent Federalists such as Perkins, and that Crisp and Cotton were in some ways closer to Calvin's ideas of imputation. This writer, however, prefers to suggest that Crisp (and possibly Cotton) represented but one of the two main branches of Calvinism. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that neither Crispianism nor mainstream Federalism were in the direct line of descent from Calvin. Both were closer than the other to Calvin in some respects and further from Calvin in others. Similarly, Hyper-Calvinism sometimes follows Crisp against the Puritan Federalists, and at other times follows the Puritan Federalists against Crisp. This is true with regard to justification, imputation and other doctrines. Hyper-Calvinism almost always is a new and unusual combination of Antinomianism and Puritan Federalism; sometimes it is more extreme than Antinomianism but rarely is it ever closer to Calvin than are either of

the other two.

What about regeneration and sanctification? Crisp and Gill accepted these but placed them after justification in the historical order. The elect are justified before they believe, for Christ's righteousness has already been imputed to them. At regeneration God gives them faith and infuses Christ's righteousness into them, this resulting in the beginning of the sanctification process. Repeatedly Gill stresses that justification is imputed righteousness and that sanctification is infused righteousness.¹⁹ Justification is not infused righteousness, nor is sanctification imputed righteousness. If the former were not true, Romanism would be correct; if the latter were not true, practical Antinomianism would be the norm and necessity of the Christian's life.

It might be correct to assume that this imputed-infused dichotomy follows three other dichotomies noticed in other areas of Gill's thought. Firstly, it follows the division of eternity and time. Christ's righteousness is imputed in eternity but infused in time (as a result of justification in foro conscientiae, which is by imputation.) Secondly, it follows the actual-virtual scheme. By justification the elect are not actually made righteous but are only virtually (figuratively, legally) made or accounted righteous. Consequently, in sanctification men are not merely or virtually made righteous but are actually and literally made righteous, though not perfectly so but gradually. Imputation is virtual; infusion is actual. Thirdly, it follows the apex logicus dichotomy of the pure mass/permitted Fall (Supralapsarianism and Sublapsarianism). Gill never develops these comparisons but he is clearly governed by these three patterns in his theological methodology. Most obvious of all is his penchant for the use of dichotomy.

One final comment is appropriate. Gill maintained that "it cannot be said, with any propriety, that justification of life is offered to any; since justification is a forensic, a law term, and signifies a sentence pronounced, or declared, not offered".²⁰ As we shall see in a later

19. E.g., Comm on Job 9:2, Rom. 3:20; Body, pp.207, 503. See Popham's sermon, 'Hungering for Righteousness', in Sermons, vol.IV, pp.147-157. Popham held that there is an 'imputed sanctification' as well as an 'imputed justification' (vol.II, p.94; vol.III, p.79). Cf. Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, p.320. As we shall see in Chapter X, Stevens (Thoughts on Sanctification, pp.6-27) and others believed in imputed sanctification, basing the doctrine on the substitutionary sanctification of Christ.

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chapter, Gill bases this upon the difference of commerce and jurisprudence. An offer is commercial; a pronouncement is legal. God pronounces justification; He does not sell it. God justifies; He does not invite or command man to justify himself. Justification is definite, but to offer it would be to render it uncertain and possibly illegal.

Justification, then, is not a legal fiction, nor the 'imputed nonsense' which Arminians contend that it is.²¹ They err, say the Hypers, because being sinners blinded by sin they reckon everything to do with righteousness in the exact opposite of God's way.²²

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20. Cause, p.37. This follows Hussey, Glory, p.379; and Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, p.242. Stevens: "he does not offer this righteousness to any; but freely imputeth it to his elect" (Help, vol.I, p.58. Cf. p.87). On the other hand, a number of Supralapsarians have held that pardon and/or justification are offered. So, e.g., Comrie, ABC of Faith, p.120.

21. Philpot vigorously denies this charge, which he calls "daring blasphemy" (Sermons, vol.X, p.38). Cf. Warburton, Gospel, p.83; Mercies, p.115; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.206; Huntington, Works, vol.II, p.90; vol.III, p.363; Substance, p.55. Bradbury, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.IV, p.189. Styles: "There are no legal fictions in the court of eternal equity" (Manual, p.60). But Styles seems to be saying also that this means that justification includes infusion. Kuyper, a non-Hyper Supralapsarian, says that justification by imputation is neither a fiction nor a paradox (The Holy Spirit, p.375).

22. Note Dell's astute observation: "as the world reckons their own sin for righteousness; so it reckons God's righteousness for sin ... however the world reckons us evil doers and not worthy to live in the world, yet God reckons us righteous, and our righteousness is before him" (Works, p.103).

C. ETERNAL JUSTIFICATION

Many writers have described or defined Hyper-Calvinism or Antinomianism in terms of the doctrine of eternal justification.¹ As far as the present writer knows, the theory has been held by all the major Hyper-Calvinists and Antinomians. There is some evidence that some non-Hyper-Calvinists have also held it, such as Bunyan (early), Witsius, Hoornbeck, Twisse, Pemble, Chauncey and Ames.² Gill and Davis appealed to Goodwin on it.³ Baxter accused Owen of it,⁴ but it is unlikely that either Goodwin or Owen actually held it in the exact formula expressed by the above divines, though their High Calvinism opened the door to it. Keach, the Marrow of Modern Divinity and Turretin rejected it, and Gill chose Turretin as the representative of the non-eternal school.⁵ The doctrine was in regular debate among Dutch Federalists as well, from Comrie (for) and Brakel (against) in Gill's

1. See the following: Flavel, Works, vol.III, pp.555-556; vol.VI, pp.261-264; Goodwin, Works, vol.IV, p.277; Fuller, Works, p.344; Hoornbeck, in Gill, DJ, pp.42-43; Mayo, True Scripture Doctrine, p.14; Bavinck, in Berkouwer, Faith and Justification, p.146; Clipsham, p.104; Kevan, p.43; Berkhof, Systematic Theology, pp.517-520; Baxter, Works, vol.II, pp.154-155; Engelsma, pp.10, 132; Pink, Election and Justification, p.237; J.A. Jones, The Cause of God and Truth, p.21; Toon, HC, pp.28, 144-145; E.S. Williams, Systematic Theology, vol.I, p.233. Wilks said that Modern Antinomians hold to eternal justification, while Modern Calvinists believe in justification in time (Wilks, p.23. Cf. pp.349, 380). Bellamy differentiated 'Gross Antinomianism' from 'Refined Antinomianism'. The former teach eternal justification before faith, faith being the persuasion that one was justified eternally; the latter teach justification by faith, since all men (including the elect) are under wrath before they believe. (Works, vol.III, p.118). William Young lists among twenty distinctives of Antinomianism the belief that "The elect are actually justified before they believe, even from eternity"; but later he modifies this, for "Even the doctrine of justification from eternity is in itself no more antinomianism than supralapsarianism is hyper-Calvinism" (Encyclopedia of Christianity, vol.I, pp.271-272). See Chapter X.

2. Cf. Greaves, The Doctrine of Grace in the Writings of John Bunyan, pp.256-257, 294; Harrison, p.17; Gill, DJ, p.65; Davis, Truth, p.10; Toon, HC, p.61; Gill, Body, pp.203, 205; Hussey, Glory, pp.555, 797-798. Later Hypers also accepted it: Wilks, pp.349-389 (Wilks lists Gill, Witsius, Goodwin, Ames and Crisp as holding it, pp.370, 380); J.A. Jones, The Cause of God and Truth, pp.21-35; Philpot, Eternal Sonship, p.87; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, p.502; IK, vol.II, pp.336-337; Abundant Mercy, pp.170-171. Pink rejects 'actual' eternal justification (Election and Justification, pp.226, 237; Reconciliation, p.8). On the doctrine in the Antinomian Controversy, see Edwards, Crispianism Unmasked, pp.51-52; Beart, Truth Defended, Part II, pp.1-19. Heppe gives a brief summary of the various Reformed views of the subject, in Reformed Dogmatics, pp.557-558.

3. Body, pp.205-206; Davis, Truth, p.10.

4. Cf. Gill, Body, p.209; Owen, Works, vol.X, pp.449-451.

5. Keach, Display, pp.300-302; Marrow of Modern Divinity, pp.156-158; Gill, Body, pp.206-209. Though Gill differed with Turretin on eternal justification, he still acknowledged a debt to this 'learned author' (DJ, p.72), especially in the Body.

own time down to Kuyper (for) and Bavinck (against) in more recent times.⁶

John Gill certainly held it.⁷ He was, in fact, the champion of the position in his day⁸ even as he was probably the most eminent Federal dogmatician of the century in England (Boston was Scottish and much earlier, and Edwards was American and more philosophical and never wrote a systematic theology). He admits that he was slandered and accused of Antinomianism for holding it,⁹ but he continued to support the position throughout his life. It is surprising that he distinguished it from Supralapsarianism. According to him, some Supralapsarian writers rejected eternal justification, and Gill conceded that this was possible without too great an inconsistency.¹⁰ He does not name anyone in particular but he may have been thinking of Beza and Perkins. On the other hand, it would be difficult to name anyone who held it who was not Supralapsarian.

No discussion of Hyper-Calvinism is complete without some investigation of this doctrine. There is much misunderstanding about just what it is. Is it, as one of Gill's contemporary critics styled it, "eternal nonsense"?¹¹ Two main aspects of the doctrine come to the fore in the issue: the time of justification (eternal or temporal) and its relation to faith (before or after faith). The present section deals with the first, to be followed in the next section by a look at the second.

It must be noted at the outset that the proponents of this position rarely say that the doctrine is explicitly stated in Scripture. The general impression one gets is that its advocates feel that the doctrine must be inferred from other premisses which are explicitly stated in Scripture. Of course, many Bible verses are called in for support, and eternal justification is purported to be the logical teaching of a number

6. Cf. Harrison, p.17; Berkouwer, Faith and Justification, pp.143-168; Kuyper, The Holy Spirit, pp.369-371; Bavinck, Our Reasonable Faith, p.459.

7. On Gill's theology of eternal justification, see especially DJ; Body, pp.201-209, 501-518; Seymour, pp.78-79, 166-168.

8. This is acknowledged by Brine, EJ, p.5.

9. S & T¹, vol.II, p.179. See Chapter X.

10. S & T¹, vol.II, p.73. So also Brine, Remarks, p.9.

11. Mayo, p.15.

of passages. For this reason a number of Federalists, such as Bavinck, rejected it.¹²

Gill is probably the best representative of the position not only because he is the most influential and pre-eminent Hyper-Calvinist but also because he writes at such length in defence of it. In his works on the subject are found all the classical arguments. It is fitting then, that we examine his views in our study of Hyper-Calvinism.

Much of the controversy concerns whether justification is successive. The emphasis in Gill is that it is "at once". (This popular phrase in Gill seems to be borrowed from Crisp, who also used it.¹⁴) As such, justification "admits of no degrees" and "is perfect and complete" and therefore cannot be "gradual, progressive (or) successive".¹⁵ Gill: "We are not to imagine, that as often as the saints sin, repent, confess their sins, and pray for the forgiveness of them, that God makes and passes new acts of pardon (or justification)".¹⁶ This is because God does nothing new in time with salvation that He has not already done in eternity in the Covenant, as we saw in our chapter on divine sovereignty. Justification is an immanent, not a transient, act in God and is therefore eternal, for all immanent acts are in God who is eternal.¹⁷ Gill maintained that the whole substance of justification lay in God's "will to justify" the elect.¹⁸ It is more than "a mere resolution and purpose to justify his elect in time ... more than a decretive justification".¹⁹ This is probably aimed at countering the Confessions of Westminster, Savoy and 1689, all of which verbatim agree that "God did,

12. Cf. Berkouwer, Faith and Justification, p.147.

13. E.g., DJ, p.84; S & T¹, vol.II, p.179; Comm on Psal. 32:6; Body, p.517.

14. CAE, vol.I, p.297.

15. DJ, p.84; Body, p.517; S & T², vol.II, pp.549-550; CAE, vol.I, p.297.

16. S & T², vol.II, pp.549-550. Cf. Comm on Psal. 32:6.

17. Body, pp.203, 207; S & T, vol.II, p.179; DJ, pp.47-48, 68-69. So too Brine, EJ, pp.13-14; Twisse, in Gill, DJ, p.65; and Rutherford, in Gill, DJ, p.47. Simpson summed up the Antinomian view: "God justifies, and saves none, but those who were justified and saved before him from eternity" (Salvation by Grace, p.31). Wilks quotes Allen: "as justification is an emanent [sic] act in God, an act of grace in his eternal mind, it can take place but once" (Wilks, p.377). Stevens: "election is an immanent act, and conversion is a transient act; justification, viewed in different respects, is both" (Pastoral Letter, p.8).

18. Body, pp.203, 206; Comm on Gal. 3:11; DJ, p.48.

19. DJ, p.46.

from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect ... nevertheless, they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them".²⁰

Gill again here asserts in his axiomatic way that "as God's will to elect, is the election of his people, so his will to justify them, is the justification of them".²¹ (In this he appeals to Rutherford, which may surprise most persons because Rutherford was one of the greatest opponents of the Antinomians on justification, though he himself was a very High Calvinist.) Election necessitates justification. Since the one is eternal, the other must be also. And neither are based on prescience.²²

At this juncture opponents often ask, "If the will to justify is justification itself, why not the same with creation, the Incarnation, the atonement, calling, regeneration, sanctification or glorification?"²³ Gill ignores the question except in regard to calling and sanctification. For the first he says that vocation is not eternal; the order is in Romans 8:30 is reversed, as sometimes occurs in Scripture (but note that he does not say that this is the case with foreknowledge in the previous verse).²⁴ As for the second, sanctification is a transient act and requires the actual existence of the elect.²⁵

This is justification "in the court of God" (in foro dei), which is applied and manifested "in the court of conscience" (in foro conscientiae).²⁶ Though a number of Puritan Federalists accepted this

20. Westminster Confession, XI:4; Savoy, XI:4; Baptist 1689, XI:4. The latter two add "personally" after "justified", which merely clarifies the position.

21. Body, p.203; DJ, p.48. Contra Turretin (cf. DJ, pp.68-69). Wilks held that election and eternal justification stand and fall together (p.372).

22. DJ, p.47.

23. DJ, pp.46, 48-50; Comm on Rom. 8:33. But see S & T, vol.II, p.179; DJ, pp.66-67. Contra Davis, Truth, pp.10, 47.

24. Cf. Mayo, p.66; Turretin, in DJ, pp.70-71; Berkouwer, Faith and Justification, p.147; DeJong, p.115.

25. Body, pp.207-208; Comm on Rom. 8:30; DJ, pp.70-71; Brine, EJ, pp.66ff.

26. DJ, p.48; Body, p.207. On sanctification see Chapter X.

27. Body, p.209 and often. So also Gadsby, Works, vol.II, pp.202, 214; Brine, Motives, pp.13-14 (cf. Clipsham, p.104); Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.502, 505; IK, vol.II, pp.337, 340, 343, 350. Gill sometimes called the former "the court of heaven" (e.g., Comm on Psa. 32:6, Gal. 3:11). Kuyper said that justification at God's "Judgement-seat" is "published to our consciences" (The

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dichotomy, it was Crisp who popularized it. In one place he spoke of justification in "a double sense" but usually conceived of justification in three stages or levels,²⁸ viz:

- (1) Eternal justification in election.
- (2) Virtual justification in Christ's resurrection.
- (3) Actual justification in the conscience of the believer.

This outline was accepted by Ames, Traill, Goodwin, the Marrow of Modern Divinity, Pink, and many others.²⁹ Bolton added a fourth stage (the final justification in the eschatological consummation³⁰) and Kuyper later added a fifth (the daily exercise of faith).³¹ The three-tiered scheme was most popular, however, probably because it followed a Trinitarian order. Some other writers have six or even eight stages.³²

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Holy Spirit, pp.370-371). Gadsby says, "the court of justice is set up in the conscience", which is "the bar of a just and holy God in the court of conscience" (Works, vol.II, p.264). Philpot speaks of the latter as experimental justification (Meditations, vol.I, p.65). Irons speaks of celestial and experimental justification, or that which is eternal and that which is temporal (Jazer, p.40). Wells has two completely different stages of justification: equitably by faith in Christ and evidentially by works (Last Sermon, p.8).

28. Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.323-324. Cf. K.M. Campbell, 'The Antinomian Controversy', p.70; Kendall, p.222; Bavinck, Our Reasonable Faith, p.459; Toon, HC, p.60.

29. Ames, in DJ, p.42; Traill, Works, vol.I, p.276; Goodwin, Works, vol.VIII, pp.134-137; Marrow of Modern Divinity, pp.156-157; Pink, Election and Justification, p.226. Some Hyper-Calvinists have varied the three-fold system. Stevens: "Sin is put away decretively, sacrificially, and declaratively; the first by the will of the Father; the second by the merit of the Son; the third by the witness of the Holy Spirit" (Recollections, p.30). Note how Stevens prefers to speak of the last in terms of assurance rather than faith. Philpot listed three stages: election, atonement ("actual"), and the manifestation in conscience (Sermons, vol.IX, p.125). Windridge lists the three levels in which the elect are godly: eternity, atonement, and experimental implantation (pp.216-217). Hussey has three stages as well: in, through, and with Christ (Glory, p.785).

30. Kendall implies that Bolton distinguished justification at the point of faith and the point of assurance, thus making in fact five stages (p.193). Ames sometimes employed the fourfold system: decree, resurrection of Christ, faith, and the witness of the Holy Spirit (Marrow, p.161). Styles employs four stages: decretively (eternally), virtually (resurrection), experimentally ("when His blood is brought into vital contact with their consciences"), and declaratively ("by works in the sight of the church and the world by the performance of those holy actions which openly demonstrate their reception of the saving grace of God") (Manual, pp.62-63).

31. Cf. Berkouwer, Faith and Justification, p.144. Lutherans and Neonomians have stressed this aspect of justification.

32. Hoeksema gives six: eternity, atonement, resurrection, declaration in the Gospel, faith and ultimate revelation (IK, vol.II, pp.336-338; Dogmatics, p.503). Pink also lists six stages: decretively (eternity), efficaciously (resurrection), actually (faith), sensibly (assurance by the Spirit), manifestly (obedience), and finally (the day of judgement). Cf. Election and Justification, p.252. Thomas Bradbury gives eight: "Sovereignly by God ... Freely by His grace ... Meritoriously by Jesus' Blood ... Imputatively by His obedience ... Authoritatively by His resurrection ... Efficaciously by His Spirit ... Experimentally by faith ... Evidentially by ... Cont'd:

Gill accepted the threefold scheme and occasionally added Bolton's fourth stage.³³ This does not mean that he accepted that there are several times when the elect are justified. Justification is "but one", but it may be spoken of as plural because of the several seasons or stages in which it passes from act to application, manifestation, and declaration.³⁴ It is the first stage that is by far the most important and receives the most emphasis in Gill's theology. Most Puritan Federalists held that there are several stages of justification, but the Antinomians and Hyper-Calvinists place more stress on the initial stage than on the others.

The first stage, or justification itself, was in the Covenant of Grace when Christ became surety for the elect, agreeing to die for them.³⁵ This is eternal justification because of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.³⁶ It is eternal justification because it originated in eternity, not merely because it lasts into eternity.

The way of conceiving of justification is emphatically Federal. Christ is seen as the representative of the elect in the Covenant of Grace. Properly speaking, it is Christ who is justified, not the elect. Since He was their representative and Head, they are justified in Him.³⁷ As we would expect, Gill relates the doctrine of eternal justification to eternal union. Compare:

... by electing grace men were put into Christ, and were considered as in him before the foundation of the world; and if they were considered as in him, they must be considered as righteous or unrighteous; not surely as

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works" (Justification, pp.18-19; It is God That Justifieth, pp.13-14; Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.I, pp.320-336).

33. Body, p.517; S & T', vol.II, p.61; Comm on Rev. 19:8.

34. Body, p.517; DJ, p.84; Comm on Rev. 19:8.

35. DJ, pp.53-56; Body, p.209; CAE, vol.I, p.91 note; S & T', vol.II, p.179; Comm on Rom. 5:9, Rev. 19:8; Brine, EJ, p.30; Bavinck, Our Reasonable Faith, p.459.

36. Comm on Rev. 13:8.

37. S & T', vol.I, pp.129-130, 507. Gill appeals to Goodwin on this point in DJ, pp.50-51. Cf. Wilks, p.379. Hoeksema stresses that "Christ is the Justified One par excellence" (Dogmatics, p.500), and points out that His unique and representative justification included both the atonement and the resurrection (Survey, pp.413-420; TK, vol.II, p.275; Dogmatics, p.503). See also Chapters V and IX.

unrighteous, unjustified, and in a state of condemnation; for there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ, Romans viii.i and therefore must be considered as righteous, and so justified.³⁸

The reason for this reaches back to the Supralapsarian election from the pure mass. Note the following extract:

Secret being in Christ, or union to him from everlasting, is the ground and foundation of our justification, by his righteousness, as an open being in Christ at conversion is the evidence of it.³⁹

Hence the order of the decrees must surely be election, union, justification, pardon. As election is 'in Christ' through eternal union, so also is justification 'in Christ' through eternal union. Justification therefore must be eternal.

This again raises the question of eternal union and the pre-existence of human souls. Gill rejected the eternal, actual existence of human souls. He sees their being as Federal and representative and decretive. Eternal justification "required neither the actual existence of Christ's righteousness, nor of our persons, but only that both should certainly exist in time".⁴⁰ In this he refers to Maccovius against Turretin and Mayo.⁴¹ If election did not require the actual existence of the elect, neither did eternal justification.⁴² If men were accounted sinners in Adam before they existed or personally sinned, so too could they be accounted righteous in Christ before they existed.⁴³ And if Christ died for the elect before they existed or personally sinned, so God could have justified them before they existed.⁴⁴ Sanctification, by contrast, is not a Federal transaction since it is the infusion of righteousness and as such requires our personal and actual existence.⁴⁵

38. Body, p.205. Gill appeals mainly to Goodwin on this. Cf. Chapter V.

39. Comm on II Cor. 5:21. So too Brine, Imputation, p.23; Crisp, CAE, vol.II, pp.219-220; Warburton, Gospel, p.67; Dell, Works, p.307. Cf. Bedford, p.27.

40. DJ, p.48. Cf. also pp.45-46. So too Feist, The Believer's Security, p.10.

41. DJ, pp.65-67; Body, pp.206-207; Mayo, p.65.

42. Body, pp.206-207; Seymour, p.168.

43. Body, p.207; Brine, Imputation, p.23. Cf. Bedford, p.29.

44. DJ, p.67; Body, p.207.

45. DJ, p.48.

Nowhere in the doctrines of Hyper-Calvinism is the actual-virtual scheme more evident than here. Many critics before and after Gill have claimed that the Antinomians and Hyper-Calvinists taught that the elect were actually justified from eternity. But this is a misunderstanding. Gill himself plainly confesses:

I have carefully avoided calling justification, or union from eternity, actual ... eternal justification is actual (only) as it is an immanent act in God that justifies; and eternal union is actual, as it is an act of God's everlasting love to his elect.⁴⁶

The Puritan Federalists had explicitly stated that a man is not actually justified until he believes (see, for example, Westminster Confession, Savoy Confession, 1689 Confession, Marrow of Modern Divinity, and Turretin.⁴⁷) This was one of the points debated at length in the Neonomian Controversy in the 1690's. Richard Davis was accused of teaching actual justification from eternity, and he partly admitted it, though elsewhere he hedges some.⁴⁸ Brine clearly taught it in boldest language: "... even while the elect are unconverted they are actually justified".⁴⁹

It is curious that in one place Gill seems to reject the use of the terms 'actual' and 'virtual' in regard to justification. Speaking of 'virtual justification' in the resurrection of Christ he says, "This phrase, I confess, is unintelligible to me".⁵⁰ He does not elaborate but it is possible that he rejected it for the same reason put forth by Brine. Brine said that "This distinction of virtual and actual I cannot well understand, especially as it is used in the affair of Justification"

46. S & T, vol.II, p.88. Cf. Ivimey, vol.III, pp.272-273, 367; De Jong p.115; Young, Encyclopedia of Christianity, vol.I, p.271; Toon, HC, p.28; Philpot, Meditations, vol.I, p.64; Traill, Works, vol.I, p.276. Some critics (such as Young and Toon) feel that the Antinomians held that eternal justification is 'actual', whereas in fact they felt that it was only decretive. Tobias Crisp's son Samuel held that "If there were no virtual justification, (when Christ satisfied...), there would be no actual" (in CAE, vol.I, p.xv). And yet the extreme Washington Wilks could state that "Christ Jesus's righteousness, as the head and representative of God's elect, actually justified them, even from eternity" (p.380).

47. Westminster Confession, XI:4; Savoy, XI:4; Baptist 1689, XI:4; Marrow of Modern Divinity, pp.156-157; Turretin, quoted in ibid., note.

48. Rehokosht, pp.10-11; Davis, Truth, pp.10, 19, 47.

49. Brine, Motives, pp.13-14; DJ, p.37. Cf. Clipsham, p.104.

50. DJ, p.45.

because to advocate virtual justification in the Resurrection would make it but potential and indefinite.⁵¹ Nevertheless, we do sometimes find the terms 'actual' and 'virtual' used by both Gill and Brine.⁵² But how did they use them?

It is probable that Gill used 'actual' to mean 'transient' or 'temporal'. God actually justifies men when He acts in time. 'Actual' does not mean merely definite, for decretive justification is definite, since whatever God decrees will most certainly come to pass. It might mean applied or 'manifested', but these are not usually accepted as synonyms for 'actual'. Nor does it mean 'completed', though justification passes through stages, it is still 'but one' and 'complete' in the Covenant.

The key may be found in his use of 'actual' in referring to eternal union. The elect have a 'secret being' in Christ in eternity and an 'open being' in time. Since union and justification are associated, 'virtual justification' is 'secret justification' and 'actual justification' is 'open justification'. Gill admits that justification is secret and 'hid' in God until it is manifested.⁵³

A better indication of his meaning behind the terms is his agreeing with Hoornbeck's dichotomy of active and passive justification:

... the former is the act of God justifying, the latter the termination and application of it to the conscience of the believers; the one is done at Christ's satisfaction, the other when a person actually believes... it is former, and not the latter, that is properly justification.⁵⁴

Thus, at the time of Christ's Resurrection God 'actively' justified the elect. Now it can hardly be denied that 'active' and 'actual' are similar terms. They both have to do with activity and may be synonyms.

51. Brine, EJ, pp.39-40. Compare the similar controversy surrounding limited atonement in Chapter IX below.

52. Body, p.517; Brine, EJ, p.46.

53. Comm on II Cor. 5:21. Cf. Comm on Gal. 3:11; Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.323-324; vol.II, pp.219-220; Philpot, Meditations, vol.I, pp.64-65.

54. CAE, vol.I, pp.91-92, note. On objective justification, cf. Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, pp.320, 349, 428.

The problem is that in the above quotation Gill places 'active' (actual) justification at the time of the Atonement and Resurrection rather than in eternity or at the time of faith. He offers no explanation for this inconsistency, nor does he seem aware of it. Also note that he uses the term 'actual' in reference to faith, but this does not refer to justification itself but to the manifestation of it through the gift of faith. Also observe that he equates 'active' justification with 'proper' justification; the latter is regularly equated with eternal justification. Logically, then, active justification is eternal justification.

The tendency was obviously for Gill to put justification entirely in eternity. As we have regularly seen, he considers the eternal to be definite and actual and real, whereas what is temporal is but a shadow and manifestation. One gets the distinct impression that he considers time to be virtual in relation to the actuality of eternity. But this contradicts what he clearly said about actual justification not occurring until faith. It appears, then, that he is being either cautious or inconsistent.

In the confusion of the actual-virtual scheme we see what Berkouwer well styles "the Reformed counterpart of idealism" which throws all importance onto eternity and minimizes the significance of time and history.⁵⁵ History is without meaning except as a shadow of the eternal. But Gill seems to suggest that therein lies history's true significance. It is but a sign pointing to God.

Gill speaks little of justification in the Resurrection. One gets the impression that had not Scripture explicitly spoken of it, he too would never have spoken of it (in contrast to the lack of explicit Scripture references to eternal justification). He is Hyper-Federalist, as it were, and places in eternity the greater bulk of Christ's work as representative of the elect. The basic and ultimate object of faith is not the historical work of Christ on earth but His eternal work in the Covenant. This is perhaps the very crux of the Hyper-Calvinist dilemma. As for justification in the Resurrection, he speaks of it far less than of justification in eternity and even less than justification at the point of faith. Critics agree that Scripture does in fact speak more often about justification by faith than it does about justification in the

55. Berkouwer, Faith and Justification, p.148. Cf. Flavel, Works, vol.III, pp.555-556.

atonement or Resurrection, but they are quick to add that Scripture says even less (if anything at all!) about justification in eternity.

A few words on his views of Resurrection-justification will help clarify things and prepare the stage for our discussion later about limited atonement. Gill agrees that the elect were in some sense justified in the Resurrection. He is reluctant to speak of it as 'virtual', as we noted above, but he sometimes concedes and uses the term nonetheless.⁵⁶ It was a common practice for the Puritans to speak of it as virtual – so Goodwin and Davis, among others.⁵⁷ His teaching, in effect, differed little from theirs. The differences were mostly those of emphasis and vocabulary, such as the use of actual, virtual, etc. The atonement and Resurrection can be spoken of as complementary parts of the same act. This act was based on the Covenantal engagements in eternity, of which it was but a shadow. Of course, Gill denies that Christ was 'actually' (literally) slain or resurrected in the Covenant; nobody has ever advocated such a view. Hence, the real significance lies in the Covenant engagements, which are the basic objects of our faith. But, as we shall later see, Gill's theology placed far less emphasis on faith than had the Reformers or even the Puritans. In the same way, he placed less emphasis on the atonement-Resurrection act than they did. It would seem that this act received even less stress than what was placed on faith. It is almost a parenthesis. This is especially apparent with regard to justification. The marrow of justification by faith is not the persuasion that Christ had made full satisfaction for oneself, as Calvin had taught. The prime object of justifying faith is the Covenant and the eternal engagements of Christ.

He also places more emphasis on eternal justification than on justification by faith so as to counter-balance the Neonomian position which, to Gill at least, put the marrow of justification in the act of faith itself. The Neonomians, as well as other Low Calvinists and Arminians, contend that it is of the essence of saving faith to believe that Christ died personally for oneself. For them justification by faith

56. "It was virtually pronounced on the elect in Christ" (Body, p.517). Cf. Comm on I Tim. 3:16, Rev. 19:8; S & T, vol.II, p.61; Body, p.205; CAE, vol.I, p.91 note.

57. Goodwin, Works, vol.IV, p.64; vol.VIII, pp.134-137; Davis, Truth, pp.10, 47. Philpot sometimes speaks of it as mystical resurrection (e.g., Meditations, vol.III, p.129), and says that "the whole Church virtually and mystically rose in and with Him" (Sermons, vol.X, p.94). This also applies to the glorification of Christ (ibid., p.101). On Christ's quickening the dead "by virtue of His resurrection", see ibid., p.105.

must link up with virtual justification in the atonement-Resurrection act. Gill avoids this by linking justification by faith primarily with eternal justification. Faith in eternal justification is seen as the means of appreciating the atonement-Resurrection; his critics often say that the Scriptural order is faith in the atonement-Resurrection act as a means of appreciating eternal transactions such as election - that Hypers reverse the order.

Gill does admit that in some sense men are justified because of "the actual redemption of them" by Christ at the cross. This is part of yet another argument in favour of eternal justification. He contends that if Old Testament saints "were justified by him on the foot of Christ's righteousness to be wrought out ... (that is) before the actual redemption of them was obtained", then why could not they have been justified in eternity?⁵⁸ (Elsewhere he says that these Old Testament saints were 'actually' justified before Christ 'actually' redeemed them.⁵⁹) If justification does not dwell primarily in the act or time of faith, it must dwell mainly in its object, which was both the atonement-Resurrection act and especially the Covenantal engagements.

Fuller disagreed with this reasoning. He argued that the atonement did not actually reconcile anyone but only made reconciliation possible. Hence, no man is actually reconciled or justified until the atonement is applied and he believes.⁶⁰ This is a popular argument posited by Moderate and Low Calvinists, not to mention Arminians. The ramifications of it for limited atonement are obvious. It was because of such arguments as this that Fuller was charged with teaching universal atonement. Fuller himself did not teach universal atonement, but his moderate view opened the door for others to pass through.

Similarly we see the offer problem arise again. Ivimey, the church historian, felt that Gill's teaching on actual eternal justification was one reason why he could not give a free offer of the Gospel.⁶¹ Does not the free offer include the offer that whosoever believes will be justified? Gill does not deal with this a great deal in relation to justification.

58. Body, p.90.

59. Body, p.206.

60. Fuller, Works, pp.315-316.

61. Ivimey, vol.III, pp.272-273.

Most of his arguments on the offer question have to do with the nature of faith, depravity and calling. Earlier we noted that he said that justification is pronounced but not offered, but this deals with another aspect of the objection. Gill would probably have answered Ivimey's protest with the reply that it would be more correct to say that whosoever believes has already been justified. And being justified, of course, he would have believed eventually and will remain in a state of justification into eternity. Ivimey's analysis is correct.

Many of the arguments against eternal justification mentioned in this section were those put forth by Turretin. One of his last was the one based on the tenses in I Cor. 6:11. There it says, "Now ye are justified", as if they had not previously been justified. Gill replies to this with only the brief comment that this verse refers to justification in foro conscientiae rather than in foro dei.⁶² And, of course, whoever is justified in foro conscientiae was necessarily already justified in foro dei. Therefore, he argues, eternal justification stands.

Our last comment concerns the argument that if eternal justification is true, then the elect have never been in a state of condemnation and if not then they had nothing to be justified from. Gill deals with this by reference to the Supralapsarian difference between election from the pure mass and the permission of the Fall. The apex logicus is appealed to yet again. Eternal justification does indeed follow election from the pure mass but partly follows the decree to permit sin. But all this is in eternity. Be it replied that this implies a chronology in eternity (which to some is a contradiction), Gill says that it is but a point of logic. In time, the elect are fallen in Adam, have actually sinned, and are justified in foro conscientiae as sinners.⁶³ Some critics reply that the whole business is theological double-talk and circular reasoning. Gill would reply, one assumes, that it is the transcendent wisdom of God and the marrow of true faith.

62. Body, p.209. Cf. Comm on I Cor. 6:11.

63. Body, pp.208-209, 507, 617; Comm on Rom. 8:1; S & T¹, vol.II, p.179. Cf. Davis, Truth, p.74; Bedford, p.30.

D. JUSTIFICATION BEFORE FAITH

The doctrine of justification may be viewed from another perspective. It concerns not the time of justification but its relation to faith. Is justification before or after faith? Is faith a condition or an evidence of justification?

There is evidence that a number of the Puritan Federalists held that the elect are justified before they believe. Gill appealed to Ames, Twisse, Maccovius, Sandford, Goodwin, Hoornbeck, Pemble, Parker and Witsius.¹ Crisp and the other Antinomians accepted it.² There is some possibility that Bunyan held it at one point and probably also Eyre and Chauncey.³ There is no doubt that Hussey, Davis, and Brine advocated it, as have all Hyper-Calvinists since.⁴ On the other hand, it was rejected by Gataker, Turretin, the Marrow of Modern Divinity, and Owen.⁵ Abraham Taylor, a contemporary and former colleague of Gill, rejected it and he and Gill exchanged tracts over it.⁶ And of course Dr. Gill was a staunch advocate of it throughout his writings.

This aspect of justification has been named as an essential tenet of Hyper-Calvinism or doctrinal Antinomianism.⁷ But it is not the sum and whole essence of Hyper-Calvinism, as neither are eternal justification

1. Body, pp.204-205; CAE, vol.I, p.91 note; DJ, pp.36-37, 42-45.

2. Allison, , p.212; John Edwards, Crispianism Unmasked, pp.8-11; Solt, pp.34, 41; Bedford, p.25. Eaton's Honeycombe teaches it and describes 'free grace' and 'free justification' in terms of justification before faith.

3. Greaves, John Bunyan, p.158; Allison, p.212; Chauncey, Neonomianism, Part II, pp.227-253. Scholars seriously question the view that Bunyan taught the theory. We know of no Low Calvinist who has espoused it.

4. Hussey, Glory, pp.443, 555, 782-785; R.I. Jones, p.115; Rehokosht, pp.10-11; Davis, Truth, p.19; Brine, Motives. On Hoeksema's views of justification by/before faith, see TK, vol.II, pp.317-327, 339-365.

5. Gataker, Justification by Faith; Turretin, in Marrow of Modern Divinity, p.157 note; Owen, Works, vol.X, pp.471-472 and often. On the other hand, Gataker, Turretin and Owen strenuously taught that the atonement secured salvation for the elect before they believe. Baxter and others have chided them for their inconsistency in rejecting justification before faith while accepting 'full salvation' before faith. See Chapter IX below.

6. Taylor, Address, p.35.

7. Cf. Baxter, Works, vol.II, pp.154-155; Buchanan, The Doctrine of Justification, pp.158-159; Berkouwer, Faith and Justification, p.152; Rutherford, The Spiritual Antichrist, often; Bellamy, True Religion Delineated, p.326; Works, vol.III, p.118; E.S. Williams, Systematic Theology, vol.I, p.233; Young, Encyclopedia of Christianity, vol.I, p.271; Toon, HC, p.28.

nor Supralapsarianism. But these three doctrines opened the door through which one could pass from High to Hyper-Calvinism. Most of the highest of the High Calvinists held it and all of the known Hyper-Calvinists accepted it.⁸ It is virtually the same doctrine as eternal justification, and the author has found no writer holding either one without accepting the other as well.

As with the Supralapsarian issue, the Confessions of Westminster, Savoy and 1689 do not deal with the details of the controversy at length. They leave their wording vague enough for someone to adhere to the Confession while accepting or rejecting justification before faith. As a matter of fact, many of those accepting it have signed and propagated these Confessions. It must be remembered that some Hyper-Calvinists and many Supralapsarians used these Confessions in their churches. For a while, at least, this was the case with Gill and probably Brine as well. The Hyper-Calvinists used these confessions and interpreted them through Hyper-Calvinist spectacles, whether rightly or wrongly. Nevertheless, it seems fairly clear that these standards did not teach the doctrine. Savoy was mainly a rephrasing of Westminster only on the articles respecting church government. Owen was the prime mover behind that Confession and he clearly rejected justification before faith. Westminster itself did not teach it. Though some of the Westminster divines held it (e.g., Twisse), most of them did not. As for the 1689 Confession, this varied little from that of Westminster, usually only on the articles on church government and sacraments. Keach was the main influence in that Confession and it appears that he did not hold to justification before faith. Keach was also Gill's pastoral predecessor and of course used this Confession as the church's standard. It was still in force when Gill was called to the post and Gill advocated the theory from his earliest days. Gill later substituted his own Statement of Faith (see Appendix) for this Confession. It may be because he came to disagree with the 1689 Confession, but he does not supply us with his reasons in any of his writings or in the Church Record Book.

Gill sincerely believed that he taught justification by faith in the

8. Virtually all Supralapsarians have held to the doctrine. All Hyper-Calvinists seem to have held to it, while it is likely that few (if any at all) Lows have accepted it. Few Sublapsarians have accepted the theory. See Wayman, Enquiry, p.vi. Hence, there are distinct links between the acceptance and rejection of the viewpoint, and the various positions on the order of the decrees.

sense taught by the Reformers, Puritan Federalists and the Bible. "I no ways set aside, nor in the least oppose, the doctrine of justification by faith."⁹ It is immediately obvious, however, that he had great difficulties with the phrase 'justification by faith' and that his use of it differed somewhat from those employing it before him.¹⁰ Critics have summed up the issue in three ways: What is the relationship between faith and justification? (Berkouwer¹¹) If justification is eternal and before faith, how can it be said to be by faith? (Mayo¹²) If men are justified from eternity and before faith, why do they need to believe at all? (Also Mayo¹³) We may add a fourth: just what is meant by the phrase 'justification by faith'?

Gill claims that "When we are said to be justified by faith, it is to be understood not in a proper, but in an improper, tropical, or metonymical sense".¹⁴ Proper justification is definite and eternal; justification by faith is improper, figurative, idiomatic, comparative and in time. Earlier we saw how Gill's hermeneutics developed the literal-figurative (allegorical) pattern and that it closely paralleled the actual-virtual scheme. Both are well illustrated in what he says about justification before faith.

Gill was also given to the use of axioms in his theology. One of his favourites concerning justification was one borrowed from Crisp: "he is first justified before he believes, then he believes that he is justified".¹⁵ Another teaches that pre-faith justification is definite and, in that sense, actual: "a man is as much justified before as after it [faith], in the account of God".¹⁶

Our discussion here concerns justification in foro conscientiae, which is sometimes called actual justification. But it has to be interpreted in the light of justification in foro dei. One of the basic arguments put

9. S & T¹, vol.II, p.179.

10. Cf. Seymour, p.209.

11. Faith and Justification, p.152.

12. Mayo, p.65.

13. Mayo, p.14.

14. DJ, p.59. Cf. CAE, vol.I, pp.91-92 note.

15. CAE, vol.I, p.91.

16. Body, p.204. So also DJ, p.59. The key words, obviously, are 'in the account of God' - referring to justification in foro dei.

forth is that, as eternity precedes time so justification precedes faith.¹⁷ Sublapsarians disagreed with this and contended that justification follows faith because election was from the impure mass. As we would expect, Gill refers to the apex logicus yet again and says that the decrees are Supralapsarian in order in eternity but the enactments in time are reversed in order. Hence, election was from the pure mass and the elect do in fact sin before they come to a perception of justification by faith. Some charge that this again is a priori circular reasoning or special pleading.

Gill elsewhere handles the problem a bit differently. He follows Crisp's reasoning thus: "When men are believers, they cease to be ungodly; but if they are not justified till they believe, Christ doth not justify the ungodly, but the godly".¹⁸ Justification therefore must precede faith or else men justify themselves by their own faith. The elect are justified as sinners, not as godly.¹⁹ Of course, this refers only to justification in foro conscientiae, for justification in foro dei is at the same time as election from the pure mass. Gill does not at all consider that there is a third option. He says justification is either before or after faith, but he doesn't seem to be aware of the position stressed particularly by Lutherans that justification is at exactly the same moment as faith. We may speculate that if he were aware of this view he would reply that there is still a logical order of cause and effect, and justification is the cause of faith rather than vice-versa.

The parallel is made to adoption. Men are not adopted because they believe, but they believe because they are adopted. They are eternally adopted; at the point of faith it is but manifested to them.²⁰ But Gill elsewhere says that eternal adoption is actual, yet he is slow to say that eternal justification is actual. As we noted before, he even explicitly denies that eternal justification before faith is actual, but we have great difficulty seeing any consistency here. Adoption and eternal justification are from the pure mass and deal with the elect as godly,

17. So Abraham Kuyper, according to Berkouwer, Faith and Justification, p.145. Gill occasionally uses this argument.

18. CAE, vol.I, p.93. Cf. Traill, Works, vol.I, p.278; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, pp.147-149; Pink, Election and Justification, pp.227-231.

19. CAE, vol.I, p.91 note; Body, pp.507, 517. Cf. Bedford, p.25.

20. Body, p.83; Comm on Rom. 8:19; Brine, Motives, pp.8ff. See Chapter V.

while justification in time deals with them as ungodly.

Now the Lutherans and the bulk of Calvinists had asserted that God justifies the ungodly at the point of faith. They did not teach justification without faith but justification by faith without works. But note the historical ordo salutis here. They contended that the historical order of salvation in time is this: faith and justification at the same time, followed necessarily by works. But Gill advocated this order: justification, faith, works. Is there a difference? Gill denies that he taught something different, for justification in foro conscientiae is indeed at about the same time as faith without works. An impasse is reached. He failed to notice that the Reformers said precious little (if anything at all) about justification in eternity.

Much of what he said on the subject was in reaction against Neonomianism. This school was popularized in the 1690's by Richard Baxter and Daniel Williams. Opposing them were Isaac Chauncey and Robert Traill, but also Richard Davis. It was from that controversy that Hyper-Calvinism arose. The Hyper-Calvinists have always argued that Neonomianism is unbiblical, legalistic, neo-Arminian and teaches justification by works. Gill's summary and refutation of Neonomianism should be quoted in full here:

It was a notion, that some years ago obtained, that a relaxation of the law, and the severities of it, has been obtained by Christ; and a new law, a remedial law, a law of milder terms, has been introduced by him, which is the gospel; the terms of which are, faith, repentance, and new obedience; and though these are imperfect, yet being sincere, they are accepted of by God, in the room of a perfect righteousness. But every article of this scheme is wrong; for 1. The law is not now relaxed, nor any of its severities abated ... 2. Nor is the gospel a new law ... it has no commands in it, but all promises ... 3. Nor are faith, repentance, and new obedience the terms of it, and required by it, as conditions of men's acceptance with God ... faith is the gift of God, and repentance is a grant from him ... 4. If these were the terms and conditions required of men, in the gospel, to be performed by them, in order to their acceptance with God, the gospel would not be a remedial law; nor these milder terms than those of the old law; for it was easier for Adam, in a state of innocence, to have kept the whole law, than it is for man, in his fallen state, to repent and believe in Christ, and perform new and spiritual obedience of himself... 5. Nor is it true, that God will accept of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one: nor can any thing more highly reflect upon the justice and truth of God, who is the judge

of all the earth, and will do right, and whose judgement is according to truth, and can never account that a righteousness which is not one.²¹

This is a fairly accurate summary of the extremes of Neonomianism, but it must be left to the reader to decide whether Gill's refutation is correct. Other reasons are adduced against Neonomianism. Gill asserts that faith is not itself justification nor righteousness. Hence he is reluctant to speak of justifying faith.²² Faith "is not the matter of (justification)"; only Christ's righteousness is that.²³ "In a word, it is God, and not faith, that justifies."²⁴ Some critics might well respond that this is a false dichotomy. To say that it is only God and not faith that justifies, is as incorrect as to say that it is grace and not faith that saves, when in fact both are necessary. Others may add that it is as incorrect as saying that it is the Father and not Christ that justifies, when both are active. There is no opposition between sola gratia, sola fide and solus Christus.

Gill also adds a detailed analysis of the causality and objectivity of justification. Faith is not the moving cause; that cause is grace. It is not the efficient cause; that is God. It is not the meritorious cause; that is the surety engagements and work of Christ. It is not the instrumental cause; that too is God. Therefore a simple syllogism proves

21. Body, pp.509-510. Cf. also DJ, pp.12-13. Unlike Antinomianism, which became Hyper-Calvinism, Neonomianism did not prosper much after the controversy of the 1690's. It was a form of Low Calvinism and thus occasional similarities with Neonomianism have cropped up here and there, as in the theology of Timothy Dwight. Some have suggested that there are distinct parallels with Dispensational Low Calvinism as expressed in the works of J.N. Darby (so, e.g., Pink, Election and Justification, pp.233-236). It is certain that the two schools had much in common as concerns the passing away of the Old Covenant, with the rider that the New Covenant is a New Law. See Chapters V and X. There is a need today for fresh research into Neonomianism and the Neonomian Controversy. Two recent works touch on it: Packer, The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter; and Kevan, The Grace of Law.

22. CAE, vol.I, p.323 note; DJ, p.15. Cf. Seymour, p.209. Similarly, Hyper-Calvinists are liable to use the phrase 'saving faith' (e.g., S & T, vol.I, p.74; Button, Remarks, p.6).

23. Comm on Rom. 5:1. Cf. Comm on Rom. 3:22; DJ, p.18. Roe: "It is the Object of his faith that is his justification, not the grace of faith - believing in Him" (p.129). Samuel Crisp: "we do not trust in faith, but by faith in Christ" (in CAE, vol.I, p.xix).

24. DJ, p.18. Comm on Rom. 5:1. This follows Crisp nearly verbatim (CAE, vol.II, p.219). Hoeksema: "We must not say, therefore, that we are justified because of our faith, on the ground of our faith, or even on condition of our faith" (Good Pleasure, p.113. Cf. pp.139, 161).

that faith follows justification: "Now if faith is not the cause, but the effect of justification; then as every cause is before its effect, and every effect follows its cause, justification must be before faith, and faith must follow justification."²⁵

In this syllogism he even appeals to Baxter. It is dubious, however, whether his quotation from Baxter is representative or accurate.²⁶ The Confessions of Westminster, Savoy and 1689 all agree that "Faith ... is the alone instrument of justification".²⁷ This is not to say that justification is not by grace, the Father, etc. It is aimed at combatting the notion that works are in any way instrumental in justification. Now Gill disagrees, though his disagreement may not be too substantial. He follows Crisp's contention that "Faith is not the instrument" and, in Crisp's typical axiomatic fashion, "we do not believe that we may be justified; but we do believe ... when we are, and because we are justified".²⁸ Improperly speaking, faith is an instrument of justification in foro conscientiae, but it must be remembered that faith itself is a gift from God. As a gift, then, it is not really the instrument or instrumental cause. Two things are inferred from this. The first is that the gift of faith always results in justification in foro conscientiae. All Federalists accept this, so there is no difference between Gill and Westminster here (see the following chapter). Secondly, since faith is a gift, it is still God that justifies, not faith itself. Faith is merely a means, or instrument, that God uses in justification in foro conscientiae. But this also is in full accord with Westminster. The differences, then, between High Calvinism as represented by the Westminster Confession and Hyper-Calvinism as represented by John Gill are minimal and semantic. But the differences of emphasis are still significant.

Another argument follows that above. Justification is the object of faith, not faith the object of justification. Faith does not justify. Only in an improper sense can it be said that we are justified by faith: "we are justified by faith objectively and relatively, as that relates to the object, Christ, and his righteousness".²⁹ Again another syllogism is set

26. Body, p.204. Cf. Wilks, p.383.

27. Westminster, XI:2; Savoy, XI:2; Baptist of 1689, XI:2. Most other Reformed confessions and catechisms have words to this effect.

28. CAE, vol.II, p.219; vol.I, p.93; DJ, pp.35-36; CAE, vol.I, p.91 note.

29. Comm on Rom. 5:1. Cf. CAE, vol.I, p.323 note; Traill, Works, vol.I, p.277. Eaton:
... Cont'd:

up. All acts (subjects) depend on and follow their objects; faith is the act (subject) and Christ's righteousness is the object of justification; therefore faith depends upon and follows Christ's righteousness in justification.³⁰

What then is faith in relation to justification? Faith is "a means of apprehending and receiving righteousness" and "a means of our knowledge, and perception of our justification by Christ's righteousness, and of our enjoying the comfort of it". It is "the sense, perception, and evidence of our justification" and "a pre-requisite to the knowledge and comfort of it, and to a claim of interest in it".³¹ Baxter had claimed that this concept of faith was the very essence of doctrinal Antinomianism, but he did not say that the mainstream Puritan Federalists held it per se.³² This was the concept of faith held by Brine, Davis, Crisp, all the Antinomians of the 1640's, all the main Hyper-Calvinists of all periods, and later of Abraham Kuyper.³³ In this sense alone can faith be a means of justification and in that sense an instrument. There is, then, no essential difference between Gill and Westminster here. Faith is an evidence of justification, since it is part of sanctification rather than of justification itself.³⁴

Another way of proving pre-faith justification is the theory that "Christ ... is sometimes called faith".³⁵ Gill asserts this but once in

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"Justification is merely passive to us ... Sanctification is active" (Honeycombe, p.459). On Objective and passive justification, cf. ibid., pp.274ff. Hoeksema: "objective justification is before faith. Objectively, we are justified regardless of our faith (Dogmatics, p.509).

30. DJ, pp.15, 17, 38; CAE, vol.I, p.91 note. This follows Goodwin, The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith.

31. Comm on Rom. 3:22, 5:1; DJ, p.61; Body, p.208. Cf. Body, p.517; S & T¹, vol.II, pp.73, 179; CAE, vol.I, pp.91-92 note.

32. Baxter, Works, vol.II, pp.154-155; Catholick Theologie, Part II, p.88. Cf. Pink, Election and Justification, p.237; Young, Encyclopedia of Christianity, vol.I, p.271; Toon, HC, p.28.

33. Brine, EJ, pp.11-12, 46; Rehokosht, p.14; Davis, Truth, p.13; Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.91; Berkouwer, Faith and Justification, p.146; Seymour, p.209.

34. Comm on Rom. 3:22.

35. CAE, vol.I, p.323 note. Baxter said that some of the Antinomians held that "Christ repented and believed for him" (Works, vol.II, p.155). Cf. Thomas Beverley, A Conciliatory Discourse Upon Dr. Crisp's Sermons, pp.25-26; Flavel, Works, vol.III, pp.556-557; Philpot, Meditations, vol.I, p.39; Sermons, vol.II, p.11. Philpot held that though Christ trusted in God, it would be incorrect to say that God trusted in Christ (Meditations, vol.III, p.77). On "the faith of Jesus", see Bradbury, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.I, pp.334-335; on 'the faith of God', see Atkinson, Faith, pp.90-91, 120-121, 123-124.

the corpus of his writings and even then without much elaboration. It is conceivable that this is a germ form of the later theory of Macleod Campbell and some twentieth-century Neo-Orthodox writers, that the elect are saved by the faith of Christ. Kendall also holds this theory and claims that Calvin taught it and that it was rejected by the bulk of the Puritan Federalists. This theory affirms that the faith of the elect is but a shadow or manifestation of the faith of Christ. Christ believes for the elect and then gives them the gift of his faith. Passages such as Romans 1:17, Gal 2:20 and Mark 11:22 are sometimes appealed to for support. It is not possible to ascertain with certainty whether Gill would have accepted the view. Certainly it follows some other views he held and the two views have much in common. There are significant differences, however. Macleod Campbell taught that Christ also repented for men, which Gill never even hints at. Campbell and Kendall also associated it with their views of universal atonement. Gill rejected universal atonement.

We are not too surprised to read of Gill's associating justification before faith with eternal and pre-faith union with Christ. One writer summed up the argument like this: "He that is in Christ is Justified, and so Justified before he do believe; Because none can believe before he be in Christ: Faith is the fruit of the Spirit".³⁶ Crisp used this argument.³⁷ Gill employed it more for proving eternal justification than the aspect of justification before faith. The main point relevant here is that faith is a gift. The gift of faith can exist before it is given and so can justification itself. Justification in foro conscientiae is but the point in time when the gift of faith is given. But, as we shall see, this presents problems with respect to repentance and assurance.

One favourite argument of the Hyper-Calvinists has been that elect infants that die in infancy are justified without faith. And if they are justified without faith, they are justified before faith. They must surely have experienced justification since it is a necessary corollary of election. Since God does not change His standards or operations in the matter of justification, it is concluded that faith is not "causa sine qua non", or that without which a man cannot be justified in the sight of

36. Bedford, p.27.

37. CAE, vol.II, pp.219-220.

God".³⁸

At this juncture Mayo asked Gill, "if men are actually justified, and pardoned and freed from punishment, from eternity (and before faith!); what occasion, Sir, for faith and repentance, or prayer for forgiveness of sin ... of Baptism ... or the Lord's Supper ...?"³⁹ He also added the mission and work of Christ, the preaching of apostles, and the need for Christians to fear and abstain from sin. The first of these additions we will consider in Chapter IX (limited atonement), the second in Chapter VIII (the offer question) and the third in Chapter X (Antinomianism). Mayo correctly saw the great difficulties of justification before faith, but pertinent to our present discussion is his question about the need for faith.

Gill replied that faith is necessary as evidence of justification and is the means of enjoying the comfort of justification. It is also useful to worship and good works.⁴⁰ However, he maintained that these do not touch the essence of justification; they concern only its application. Either Gill did not really see the problem as formulated by Mayo, or he simply ignored it.

But Mayo saw the problem clearly and correctly. If men can be justified before faith, why does God bother giving them faith at all? If they are justified before they believed - nay, even before they sinned or were even created! - why did Christ die? Did Christ have to die? Was the atonement necessary? Was it merely a shadow and manifestation of the eternal surety engagements rather than the ground of justification? Is faith itself just simply a shadow, with no real substance or purpose? Does anything in time actually have any significance bearing on the marrow of justification?

Another question similar to Mayo's may be posed in relation to the elect infant argument. Will any elect adult ever be saved and justified in foro conscientiae without faith? Allison says that Crisp taught that "No one will be saved who does not believe",⁴¹ but his observation is

38. DJ, p.60. On the infant analogy, cf. DJ, pp.60-61; Body, p.204; Brine, EJ, pp.13-14; Bedford, p.25; Kuyper, The Holy Spirit, p.370; Wilks, pp.375-376.

39. Mayo, p.14.

40. DJ, p.77; S & T¹, vol.II, p.179; Comm on Rom. 5:1.

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weak at two points. Crisp does not specify the elect infant and adult problem, nor does Allison give any documentation for the quote, which the author has failed to find in CAE, Crisp's only published work. In fact, we can find no place in Gill, Crisp, or any of the other Antinomians or Hyper-Calvinists where this problem is discussed in this exact form. One finds discussion about the need of preaching and that there is no salvation without the Gospel (see Chapter VIII). But they all hedge a bit here. If God saves and justifies infants without their believing, why does God save and justify adults with faith? God does not give infants faith, so why does he give faith to adults? And if He gives faith to adults, why does He not give it to infants? What is the exact difference between the two classes of people?

Gill taught that all infants that die in infancy are elect (see Chapter IV). One might ask, why not simply kill all infants, thereby assuring that they will never reach adulthood and therefore end up possibly in Hell? The reply is that infanticide is wrong. Also, original sin has something to do with the whole issue. All infants are sinners by original sin. All sin is culpable sin. All culpable sin deserves wrath. The only way to avoid wrath is by justification. The only way to enjoy justification is by faith. But at once the problems of Federalism are made apparent in compromises at every stage of this order, which order is sometimes asserted in the Reformed standards and writings. It is admitted by all Federalists that all infants are sinners by original sin, but not by actual sin. Original sin is virtual sin and does not incur wrath, as it is not culpable sin of itself. Opponents sometimes respond that this is a glaring inconsistency. Does not all sin demand wrath? Most Protestants disagreed with the moral-venial dichotomy of Romanism, but other divisions were instituted in its place. Some Calvinists speak of just two - actual sin and the sin against the Holy Spirit. The first of these can always be forgiven; the latter, whatever it is, can never be forgiven. Federalism inserted yet a third sort: original sin, which is always and completely forgiven in dying infants but not in unrepentant adults. In other words, original sin is not culpable sin per se. Dying infants do not need justification as such. Sometimes it is stated another way, that dying infants are justified without faith. But that means another way of justification and opens the door to Hyperism.

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41. Allison, p.212.

Other Federalists avoid the problem by claiming that there is such a thing as infant faith. If the essence of sin is unbelief, is it not at least possible that God gives to infants the possibility not to sin and therefore believe? This seeks to lessen some of the harsher aspects of the doctrine of original sin, such as the conclusion by some that dying infants go to Hell justly in their original sin. Generally this 'escape' has something to do with infant baptism, either through baptismal regeneration or the idea of family covenants. But Gill rejected both. For him there is no infant faith or faith by proxy. Infants are simply justified without faith.

This can only mean that God has two ways of justifying men in foro conscientiae: with faith and without faith. The former is the case for all the elect who are culpable for actual sins; the latter has to do with the elect who are guilty only of original sin. Original sin, therefore, is really culpable after all but, in the case of dying infants, is always and necessarily forgiven, and that without the instrumentality of faith. But the charge of inconsistency still stands and has not been answered. The Hyper-Calvinists charged the Neonomians with error because they taught that God can and has changed His method of justification. The Hyper-Calvinists say that God has not and cannot change the scheme of justification, either in object, ground or means. Yet they themselves change the scheme in order to accomodate elect dying infants, because for infants they lessen the means of justification by removing the instrumentality of faith.

On the other hand, as we shall see in our study of the offer question, Gill does not teach that any adult can be saved without faith. The conclusion we reach is that the difference lies in the nature of responsibility of the human will. Those reaching a certain 'age of accountability' (as it is usually called) are guilty of actual sin. This age occurs at different times in each person, but infants are those who have not reached it (presumably the same is the case for idiots, but not the case with rational adults who have not heard the Gospel).

But what does this matter, since faith is a gift anyway? Cannot God give the gift of faith to an infant? Gill does not explicitly deal with this, even though he still contends that all dying infants are elect.⁴²

42. See Chapter IV, Section D. Gadsby implied that infants are incapable of faith (Works, vol.I, ... Cont'd:

The key is probably in his concept of faith and its relation to knowledge. An infant is not capable of a developed knowledge, therefore he does not have the capability for receiving the gift of faith. One assumes that Gill makes an exception for John the Baptist in his mother's womb and of course for the Lord Jesus Christ in infancy. Be it further replied that this seems to limit God, the answer (we conjecture) is that this is not a limitation on God but merely the way in which God has chosen to act as a matter of course. Furthermore, God can act extra-ordinarily should He so choose to, and He has done this with John and Jesus if for no other reason than to show that He is not bound to the ordinary means of operation.

Further comments on the nature of faith are found in the following chapter.

Finally, Gill taught that "a man is not more justified after faith, than he is before faith in God's account" and therefore "after he has believed, his justification doesn't depend upon his acts of faith".⁴³ To many Low Calvinists and Arminians this is a shocking conclusion. It appears to open the door to practical Antinomianism. The Reformers, the Puritans and all others accepting sola fide have often had to defend themselves from the charge of Antinomianism, but the Hyper-Calvinists carry the matter to further extremes and have to defend themselves from the charge even more. Briefly, their response is that since God always gives the gift of faith to elect adults at the time of justification in foro conscientiae, the continual exercise of faith is ultimately dependent upon God, not the individual. And God has pledged in the Covenant of Grace to continue to supply faith. At times He withholds it from the elect after conversion, for which no reason is given by Hyper-Calvinists except to say that God has the sovereign privilege to do so and does so at least to show that He is sovereign, that He is the source of faith, and that men are dependant upon God for all things. This aspect of faith also will be discussed further in the next chapter.

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p.148. But cf. p.295). Hoeksema followed Kuyper in asserting that not only are infants capable of faith (howbeit not conscious faith), but that God's elect are usually regenerated in infancy and develop faith gradually, even before they are capable of hearing the Word. See Believers, pp.59, 134; IK, vol.I, p.328; vol.III, pp.434-435.

43. DJ, p.59.

CHAPTER VII

FAITH

A. DEFINITION OF FAITH

How does Hyper-Calvinism define faith? Does it view faith in the same way as the Reformers, Puritan Federalists, Roman Catholics or Arminians? What are the differences in each case? To answer these questions we examine John Gill's position as representative of Hyper-Calvinism¹

The Puritan Federalists generally saw faith as the chief grace of the spiritual life.² Gill would have accepted this but would have added some clarifications, for he added some emphases and sometimes used different terminology. He listed the seven kinds of faith, three as divine and four as human: (1) God's faith, or his Covenantal faithfulness and truth; (2) the Gospel, which is sometimes called 'the faith'; (3) the testimony of God, or His oath and record; (4) the faith of miracles, which can be given even to non-Christians; (5) historical faith, or mere assent; (6) temporary faith, also mere assent; (7) special faith, or saving faith, given only to the elect.³ We will centre our study mostly

1. On Gill's doctrine of faith, see especially Body, pp.730-753, 810-815. For other discussions of faith, see the following: John Johnson, The Faith of God's Elect; Riches, vol.I, pp.52-74; Evangelical Truths Vindicated, pp.34-69; Allen, The Spiritual Magazine, vol.II, pp.357-396; Martin, Sermons, vol.II, pp.18-35; Thoughts, vol.I, pp.48-54, 132-141; Stevens, The Words of Truth, pp.92-107; John Cooper, Circular Letter on Faith; Palmer, What Is Faith?; What Is Saving Faith?; Israel Atkinson, Faith; Appendix to Faith; Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.I, pp.169-180; John M'Kenzie, Believing and Sealing; Styles, Manual, pp.156-256; Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, pp.309-337; Dogmatics, pp.479-492; Pink, Studies in Saving Faith; Practical Christianity, pp.11-36. Chauncey's views are found in Neonomianism, Part II, pp.181-199. Typical of Federalist views is the treatment in Witsius, Economy, vol.I, pp.337-354; and representative of Supralapsarians are Comrie's devotional The ABC of Faith; and Goodwin, The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith.

2. E.g., The Marrow of Modern Divinity, p.209.

3. Body, pp.730-731; S & T¹, vol.I, pp.72-74; Cause, p.135. Cf. Wayman, Enquiry, pp.3-11; Styles, Manual, p.162; Stevens, Help, vol.I, p.42; Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, pp.310-311; Dogmatics, pp.491-492; Comrie, p.xvii.

on the last.

Special faith is personal. It concerns a person's receiving God's promises as made personally to himself. Thus there is no such thing as faith by proxy. Though the essence of special faith is the same in all believers, it has degrees of manifestation and assurance.⁴ The Puritan Federalists usually spoke of faith as the 'instrument' of receiving justification.⁵ Gill agreed ("faith is a means of apprehending and receiving righteousness"⁶), but he did not particularly favour the term 'instrument' because it sounded causal rather than effective or receptive. Faith receives, apprehends, embraces, depends upon, believes in, goes out unto, leans on, looks to, ventures on, lives upon, trusts in, lays hold on, and cleaves unto Christ and His righteousness in justification and salvation.⁷ It is "a confident persuasion, expectation, and assurance" of things hoped for.⁸

Again and again Gill stresses that faith is not a condition for entering God's Covenant or for being justified. If faith were a condition it would be a work, and faith is not a work in any sense whatsoever.⁹ Faith is also not a 'duty' in the strict, or even the popular, sense of the term. Many Puritans spoke of faith as a 'duty',¹⁰ but a distinctive of Hyper-Calvinism has always been the rejection of this term when speaking of faith. Gill, Gadsby and others rejected 'Duty-Faith'. In

4. Body, p.736; S & T¹, vol.I, p.226; vol.II, p.263; Comm on II Cor. 4:13. Homer Hoeksema: "Principally, it is true, once assured is always assured. But this by no means implies that our former assurance is the basis of our assurance in the present moment. Assurance is a continuing process" (Voice, p.701. Cf. p.202).

5. E.g., Westminster Confession, XI:2.

6. Comm on Rom. 3:22. So too Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.252. Hoeksema, Good Pleasure, p.206.

7. DJ, pp.17, 76-77; Cause, p.135; Comm on II Peter 1:1; S & T¹, vol.III, p.23; Body, p.498. Hale defines and gives several synonyms for faith in Catechism, pp.64-66. Each of the twenty-eight chapters in Comrie's ABC of Faith is headed by a synonym for faith. Other definitions can be found in Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.277-315 (the 'What is Faith?' tract); vol.II, p.67; J.C. Ryland, Sr., A Body of Divinity, pp.33-34; Cozens, Thought-Book, p.6; Hawker, Works, vol. VI, pp.240-242; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, p.479.

8. Comm on Heb. 11:1. So too Skepp, Divine Energy, pp.45, 49.

9. Song, p.78; CAE, vol.I, p.90 note; Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.36-37, 90, 196. Faith is not a condition, states Hoeksema, for "There are no conditions whatsoever unto 'salvation'" (Dogmatics, p.479).

10. E.g., Flavel, Works, vol.VI, p.201. Keach well summed up the Puritan position: "To believe is our Duty, but tis Christ that gives us Grace and Power so to do" (Display, p.163). Note the Augustinian flavour of this statement.

essence, however, their definition of faith differed from that of the Puritans only in emphasis and, in this instance, in terminology. All held that all men are responsible to believe whatever God says to men when it is revealed to them. The difference between the positions had to do with their stressing the relationship of faith to the Gospel more than to the Law. Hyper-Calvinists have simply stressed this more than the Puritan Federalists. The debate over Duty-Faith was mainly semantic and culminated in the nineteenth-century Gospel Standard movement spear-headed by William Gadsby. For Gadsby, 'duty' sounded legalistic and made faith based on the Law. We see Gill's position forming the link between that of the Puritans and Gadsby's, as he himself sums up his views on the problem:

... as the law is not of faith, so faith is not of the law. There is a faith indeed which the law requires and obliges to, namely, faith and trust in God, as the God of nature, and providence... but, as for special faith in Christ as a Saviour ... this the law knows nothing of, nor does it make it known; this kind of faith neither comes by the administration of it, nor does it direct to Christ the object of it, nor give any encouragement to believe in him.¹¹

Special faith is rooted in the Gospel and not in the Law. Men are not under duty to have special faith, though in a Gospel sense they are responsible to believe certain points of the Gospel. The practical implications of this for evangelism are apparent.

Unlike most Hypers, Gill saw faith as preceding repentance in the historical order of salvation (and therefore, we presume, repentance preceded faith in the order of the decrees, but Gill does not comment on this difficulty). True repentance comes from mourning for sin and that

11. Body, p.376. Cf. Comm on John 6:28-29; I John 3:23; Rom. 3:27, Gal. 3:12; Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.143; Styles: "Duty-faith is the doctrine that it is the duty of natural men to exercise spiritual faith in the Lord Jesus, and so to obtain salvation" (Guide, p.78. Cf. p.251). So too Article XXVI of the Gospel Standard Articles. Occasionally one comes across the Hyper-Calvinist dictum, "If faith be a duty, it is a work" (e.g., Johnson, Faith, p.33; Styles, Manual; p.211). Sometimes Hypers contrast faith with Christ, as if Duty-faith usurps the place of Christ. Of course, if one must choose between Christ and Duty-faith, one must choose Christ(!). Cf. Styles, Manual, pp.206-208; Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.III, p.559. When Huntington wrote that "Faith is a law", he was not teaching Duty-Faith (Works, vol.XV, p.190). As we shall see in Chapter VIII, Hyper-Calvinists quibble that the term 'Duty-Faith' is not in Scripture, nor is faith ever called a duty in Scripture. Alverey Jackson replied, "It is no where declared, affirmed, nor taught in the word of God, that faith in Christ is not a duty" (Question, p.46).

comes from faith, though there is some degree in which even a non-Christian can feel conviction of sin before conversion.¹² This is the problem involving the nature of the sense of sin and the 'sensible sinner' (sic). Only after a person looks to Christ and sees Him crucified vicariously for the sins of sinners does or can one really mourn for his sins.¹³ This looking to Christ is faith, therefore a 'sensible sinner' (one who truly mourns for sins) must therefore be a believer and a Christian. This way of viewing faith and repentance was nothing new in Federalism. Many Puritans held it, but it was Crisp's special emphasis on it that inspired early Hyper-Calvinism. According to this position, men see Christ by faith when the gift of faith is effectually given in conjunction with the preaching of the Gospel of Christ crucified. Accordingly, the only true incentive for faith, mourning and repentance is the Gospel and not the Law.

The Gospel is received by faith alone and is sometimes called 'the faith'. The Gospel is not received by works. Mourning for sins and repentance are both works and therefore must follow faith, and they are not the means by which a person receives the Gospel. In the same fashion, Christ Himself is called 'faith', since He is the object of faith through the Gospel. As Gill says,

the objects of it are not bare axioms or propositions ... The

12. Body, p.498; Skepp, p.54. Calvin expressly said that repentance follows and not precedes faith (Institutes, III, 3, 1), but Calvinists ever since have differed among themselves. Kendall has suggested that most Puritans followed Beza and Perkins in placing repentance before faith in the ordo salutis. Helm disagrees (Calvin, pp.64-65). It is certain that some Puritans did follow Beza's order, but in our opinion most did not. A glance at Perkins's famous chart from The Golden Chain should prove that he did not. And yet some Hypers explicitly disagree with Calvin's order. "In the experience of the child of God, Repentance precedes faith" (Styles, Manual, p.183). "That order is unchanging, for it is impossible to believe the Gospel till the heart be contrite" (Pink, Godhead, p.164. Cf. Interpretation, p.48; Atonement, p.287; Salvation, p.51; Saving Faith, p.12). Hoeksema is not clear on this point but seems to teach that though justification precedes faith, sanctification precedes to some extent knowledge (assurance) of justification. This could be interpreted as saying that repentance precedes faith. See Dogmatics, p.521. And yet he teaches that assurance is of the essence of faith. Popham is confusing here: "Repentance in point of time is first - rather second. Faith in point of time is first, repentance in point of manifestation is then the first. Faith believes, repentance follows, but repentance is manifested before faith" (Sermons, vol.III, p.232). Roe (p.29) and H.A. Long (p.184) also place repentance before faith. Gadsby probably follows this order (Works, vol.II, pp.205-207).

13. On faith and mourning a la Zech. 12:10, see Vinall, Sermons, pp.377-380; Hazelrigg, Sermons, vol.I, pp.201-208; Gadsby, Sermons, pp.121, 310; Huntington, Works, vol.I, p.322; vol.XVIII, p.103; Johnson, Riches, vol.I, p.244. See Chapter IX.

proper and formal object of faith is twofold, God and Christ; God as the first primary and ultimate object of faith, and Christ as mediator is the mediate object of it.¹⁴

The final object of faith is God as a Trinity and Covenant God.¹⁵ Nevertheless, one cannot savingly believe in God without believing in the Gospel. The Gospel reveals Christ, the Covenant of Grace, election, justification and much more. (The full content of the Gospel will be discussed in the next chapter.)

As we saw in the preceding chapter, Gill held that faith is but the manifestation of justification. Seymour correctly defines the Hyper-Calvinist concept of faith as "simply the manifestation of an eternal secret".¹⁶ This manifestation is, of course, given only to those who are justified (that is, the elect). Only saints have special faith. Faith is a gift which is given irresistably and effectually at the point of regeneration. Not all men have saving faith. Arminians contend that the germ, or potential, for saving faith is in all men and that any man can believe if he will. Sufficient grace has already been given by creation for the saving exercise of faith. High and Hyper-Calvinists, however, deny this. They assert that no man can savingly believe unless special faith is given. Creation and nature do indeed give the potential for temporary or historical faith; this is due to common grace. But this does not concern salvation or justification. Special faith is given by special grace, for justification itself is special. 'Special' is an adjective used much in this context and usually means extraordinary, particular and Covenantal faith.

This special faith is a gift. It must be given to men. Where, then, does it come from? Ultimately it comes from God. Yet God uses means by which He gives it to men. Owen and others spoke of faith being purchased by Christ at Calvary¹⁷ but Gill was slow to speak like this, as we might expect. Gill puts greater emphasis on the eternal Covenant than on the Cross and therefore prefers to say that special faith was

14. Body, pp.731-732. Cf. Roe, p.135. On Christ as 'faith', see CAE, vol.I, p.323 note; and Chapter VI, Section D, note 35 above.

15. Comm on Gal. 3:6; Body, p.733; S & T², vol.II, p.92; S & T¹, vol.I, pp.79, 225; Skepp, p.54.

16. Seymour, p.76.

17. Owen, Works, vol.X, pp.235, 243.

secured by Christ in His surety engagements in the Covenant.¹⁸ Of course, even Owen would admit this but Gill placed more emphasis on it. Owen, the representative High Calvinist, and Gill, the representative Hyper-Calvinist, are both reluctant to say that Scripture explicitly states that faith was 'purchased' in either the Covenant or at Calvary, but they set up the following syllogism: All benefits of justification were secured in the Covenant and atonement; faith is a benefit of justification; therefore faith was secured in the Covenant and atonement. Arminians reject this reasoning because they see faith merely as a means of justification, not a benefit.

For Gill, true faith is necessarily a gift. That faith which is not a gift is not true faith. High Calvinists agreed. However, neither school adequately explain how faith can be a responsibility and a gift at the same time. High Calvinists often explain the problem by claiming that this is the antinomy of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, while Hyper-Calvinists usually respond with the denial that faith is a 'duty' in the Law sense while it remains something of a responsibility in a Gospel sense. In other words, the former position simply refuses to explain it, while the latter evades the problem by semantical and circular argumentation. It is difficult to believe that either school does not see the problem, and Arminians and Low Calvinists have not been satisfied with the evasive answers suggested.

The passive aspect of faith receives greatest stress in Gill's idea of faith. Faith is not an act of the human will arising out of itself, even by common grace. Faith is a reaction or effect caused by special grace from outside itself, and it is actualised when special grace is internalised. If faith were mainly active, men would then be justified by works.¹⁹ Faith, rather, is the fruit, effect, and evidence of justification and is not causal in any way at all.²⁰ This passive aspect

18. Cf. S & T¹, vol.I, p.586. Johnson explicitly states that "Faith is not purchased by Christ", for it is freely given by grace (Evangelical Truths Vindicated, pp.3-13). Hypers often assert that faith is a gift, not a duty or an offer. See Palmer, Free Enquiry, p.74; Brine, Mistakes, pp.34-36 (with reservations); Huntington, Works, vol.XI, p.148; Styles, Manual, p.186; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.531-535. Alverey Jackson agreed that faith is a gift, but denied that this means that sinners do not have the duty to believe (Question, pp.6-7). See Chapter VIII. On asking for faith, see Pink, Sermon on the Mount, pp.313-314.

19. S & T², vol.III, p.21.

20. Body, p.204; DJ, pp.35-36; Brine, EJ, pp.6-7.

of faith was also emphasized by Saltmarsh, Brine and others.²¹ Kendall has recently argued that Calvin viewed faith as being primarily, if not entirely, passive.²² According to Kendall, it was Beza and not Calvin who saw faith as primarily active and that the Puritans followed Beza's lead.²³ Thus he sees the Antinomian concept of faith being a reaction against the voluntarism of Federalism and a partial return to Calvin's own view. If this is correct, then Cotton and Crisp were closer to Calvin than were the Puritans.

This may, in fact, be a correct evaluation. But we would add that the Hyper-Calvinists did not follow the Antinomian doctrines exactly and in every point (different vocabulary is but one example). On some points the Puritan Federalists were closer to Calvin than were the Antinomians (e.g., their shunning the over-literalist literary devices of Crisp), while on other points the Antinomians appeared to be closer to Calvin than were the Puritans (e.g., on the assurance of faith). If, as we feel, Hyper-Calvinism was a welding of Puritan Federalism and Antinomianism with some new developments, it constructed a further departure from Calvin than either of the other two schools rather than a return to true Calvinism. The Hyper-Calvinists, we believe, merged the more non-Calvin views of Antinomianism and Federalism, while Low Calvinism merged their more pro-Calvin views. Low Calvinism was closer to Calvin's view of faith precisely because it retained his relation of faith to the atonement. None of the Antinomians, High Calvinists, or Hyper-Calvinists accepted Calvin's idea of universal atonement. Kendall, therefore, is slightly mistaken in claiming that the Antinomian idea of faith was closest of all to Calvin's. It is probably true that the Antinomian idea of assurance was closer to Calvin's than were the views of these others, but it cannot be overlooked that the Low Calvinist idea of faith in a personal atonement was also closer to Calvin's than were any of the others. Kendall overlooks this.

As for the voluntarist idea of faith, it is true that many Puritan

21. Saltmarsh, Free Grace, p.64; Brine, Grace at Sovereign Disposal, p.21. Note Pink's disagreement: "The apostle did not say, 'Be passive, there is nothing you can do', thus encouraging the fatal inertia of hyper-Calvinists" (Salvation, p.57).

22. Kendall, Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649, Chapter 1.

23. Kendall, Chapter 2, passim. Thus Kendall contends that while Calvin felt faith was passive, the Arminians and High Calvinists both went astray by holding that faith is primarily active. This could be interpreted to mean that Beza was the Father of Arminianism.

Federalists spoke of faith as an act of the will.²⁴ But this is certainly not be equated with Arminian voluntarism, at least as far as Kendall suggests. Flavel and others like him merely were saying that, properly speaking, faith is more an act of the will than of the mind, emotions or body. As for it being an 'act', it is hardly conceivable that Flavel or any other High Calvinist held that saving faith could arise in a person without special grace. All High Calvinists followed Dort in affirming that special faith was a gift of irresistible grace. High Calvinism found expression in this in the expositions of Jonathan Edwards, who certainly saw that special grace affected the mind first and then the will through the mind. To some extent this is compatible with both Low Calvinism and Calvin, though of course Edwards stressed the deterministic character of the influence of grace upon the mind more than most. All these schools of Calvinists affirm and agree that faith is first passive and that it is a gift of special grace. None claim that faith has no active qualities. The passive precedes the active.²⁵ We have found no evidence that any of these schools ever completely negated either the passive or active aspect of faith, or that any reversed the order. The High Calvinists, however, did come close to reversing the order when they denied that assurance was of the essence of faith. Yet even then they did not deny that the initial aspect of faith has something to do with sight and passivity and understanding. Many of them used the 'trees walking' analogy (Mark 8:24) - the first sight of faith is blurred, then there is repentance, and then later there may be the clarity of assurance.

We have earlier seen how Gill stressed the eternality of justification, adoption, and election, all based upon eternal and virtual union. Consequently, it is no surprise for us to learn that Gill follows this same dichotomy and actual-virtual scheme with regard to faith. Gill says that "faith does not put a man into Christ, but makes him appear to be in him".²⁶ It must be remembered, however, that this pre-faith union is only virtual and not actual. Therefore, a man is not actually in or united to Christ until he actually believes. This does not mean

24. E.g., Flavel, Works, vol.II, p.109.

25. Cf. Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.105-106; Gill, S & T, vol.II, p.407. Pink expressly affirms that the mind controls the will: "We must believe intellectually before we can believe savingly in the Lord Jesus" (Seven Sayings, p.36. Cf. Sovereignty, p.160). James Oliphant's Thoughts on the Will, relies heavily on Edwards and Gill.

26. Comm on II Cor. 5:17.

that his faith puts him into Christ, but it does mean that God gives a man the gift of faith when He puts him into Christ in actuality. We must assume that Gill taught that the logical order of the actual event would be this: the gift of special grace, putting one into Christ, union with Christ, the new birth, the gift of faith given, sight that one is in Christ and heir of the Covenant (passive), trust in Christ (active), mourning for sin, repentance, and, later, assurance. But Gill contradicts this in his view of 'sensible sinners' (see Chapter VIII).

We have also earlier shown how Gill sees faith as essentially acquiescing in the determining will of God.²⁷ Though he rebukes 'stoical apathy', it is very difficult for us to differentiate his views from the Stoic idea of resignation of the will, especially when he commends and appeals to various Stoic writers in the very context of discussing faith.²⁸ This, however, would concern only the form of faith rather than the content of faith, for the Stoics certainly did not consider faith to contain sight of either the Covenant or Calvary, much less active trust in Christ. Gill did not consider Christian faith to be exactly synonymous with Stoic resignation, for he felt that the form and content of faith were inseparable. One might indeed suggest a parallel between Stoic and Eastern resignation (e.g., Buddhist nihilism), but even if this were true it would differ from the Hyper-Calvinist view on yet another point. The Hyper-Calvinists said that faith is not the end of sight but the beginning of it. Calvinistic justification and assurance are not at all to be equated with nihilism or oblivion.

Finally, Gill states that "all true faith does endure to the end".²⁹ Temporary faith is not saving, and saving faith is not temporary. Since faith is a gift of God in accord with the Covenant, its effectiveness and duration are ultimately dependent upon God. And God has pledged to continue to supply special faith to the elect. It is admitted that, yes, saints do occasionally sin and disbelieve God. This happens when God withdraws special grace and special faith. Nevertheless, this withdrawal is temporary. A saint cannot and will not live in a continual state of sin and unbelief.³⁰ This is the doctrine of perseverance in faith, and

27. E.g., Comm on Joshua 8:6. See Chapter III above.

28. See especially Body, pp.810-815.

29. Cause, p.134. On the doctrine of temporary faith in Calvin and High Calvinism, see Kendall, Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649.

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Gill followed mainstream Puritan Federalism in holding to both perseverance and preservation. Some recent Low Calvinists (notably the Dispensationalists) have come close to the Arminian denial of both by explicitly rejecting the former.

Cont'd:...

30. Comm on James 2:18. Cf. Gospel Standard Article XXII and Chapter X below.

B. ASSURANCE

The doctrine of assurance of salvation received considerable attention long before the age of Hyper-Calvinism. The Council of Trent denied that assurance was of the essence of faith and even that assurance of final perseverance was possible.¹ This was aimed at refuting the Reformers, who held that this assurance was possible, both for present salvation and future perseverance.

Is assurance of the essence of faith? The negative answer prevailed in seventeenth and eighteenth century Calvinism. For example, this was the view of Ames, Goodwin, Baxter, Flavel, Owen, Keach, Skepp, Brine, Alverey Jackson, Abraham Taylor, Whitefield, the main British Reformed Confessions (e.g., Westminster, Savoy, 1689), and the Puritan Marrow of Modern Divinity. It has also been held by more than a few Hyper-Calvinists.² It is probable that the Heidelberg Catechism accepted that assurance was of the essence of faith³ and this was definitely accepted by Crisp and Eaton, though not by Saltmarsh and Davis (despite some statements of theirs which may be interpreted to the contrary).⁴ It has

1. Sixth Session of 13 January, 1547; Decree on Justification, Chapters XII-XIII; On Justification, Canons XII-XVI. They are found in Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, vol.II, pp.103-104, 113-114. Gill opposed the Romanist view in S & T¹, vol. I, p.362. Pink says that many Reformers over-reacted against the Romanist position by saying that assurance is of the essence of faith (cf. Iain Murray, Pink, p.228. But see note 66 below).

2. In addition to the appropriate sections in Heppe, Lachmann and Kendall, see the following: Ames, Marrow, pp.167, 241; Goodwin, Works, vol.VIII, p.265; Flavel, Works, vol. VI, p.201; Keach, Display, pp.285-286; Skepp, pp.39-40; Brine, Antidote, p.27; Treatise, pp.147-160; Jackson, Question, p.12; Taylor, Address to Students, pp.26-28; Whitefield, Journals, p.374; Westminster Confession, XVIII:3; Savoy Confession, XVIII:3; Baptist Confession of 1689, XVIII:3. Of Hyper-Calvinists, see: Philpot, Sermons, vol.II, p.11; vol.IV, p.92; Popham, Sermons, vol.II, p.188; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.199, 207, 209; H.A. Long, Calvinism Popularized, p.124; Warburton, Gospel, p.102; Button, Remarks, pp.10-11; Stevens, Help, vol.I, p.37; Hale, Catechism, pp.65, 69; Allen, The Spiritual Magazine, vol.II, p.373; Styles, Manual, p.309. Alverey Jackson's words sum up the common position: "as this assurance is the reflex act of faith, so the direct act of faith must necessarily go before it, without which it cannot be" (Question, p.12).

3. Question 21. Cf. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p.507; Kendall, pp.29-41. The Hoeksemas follow Heidelberg and affirm that "Faith is assurance and confidence" (e.g., IK, vol.II, p.225; vol.III, pp.47-57; Good Pleasure, p.167; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.206, 701, 702, 707).

4. Cf. Kendall, pp.185-188; Saltmarsh, Free Grace, pp.99, 155-157, 172-174; Davis, Truth, pp.56-58, 90. Eaton spoke of growth in assurance (e.g., Honeycombe, p.155). Cf. Bellamy, True Religion Delineated, p.326; Cudworth, Some Reasons Against Making Use of Marks and Evidences, In Order to Attain the Knowledge of our Interest in Christ. The Antinomians denied, in essence, that faith and doubt are reconcilable. In this respect Philpot agrees: "Doubts, then, such as a Christian is exercised with, are not of the essence of faith, nay are utterly contrary to it" (Reviews, vol.I, p.423).

often been noted that doctrinal Antinomianism makes assurance of the essence of faith, and many Antinomians did in fact take this position, though some did not. However, they err who suggest that the position itself constituted Antinomianism.⁵

Wesley and most evangelical Arminians take a decidedly different position. For them assurance of present salvation was possible but one could not have full assurance of final perseverance. This was in some ways a mediating position between Rome and the Reformers. On the other hand, they sometimes included assurance as a necessary part of conversion, which was usually expected to be sudden and emotional. Some difficulties arose with regard to the Perfectionist doctrine. For example, can one who is entirely sanctified arrive at a yet higher degree of assurance? If a non-entirely sanctified person can have assurance of present salvation, cannot one made perfect attain to assurance of final salvation? Usually the answer is negative.⁶

Similar to the Arminian position was that of Butler, a contemporary of Dr. Gill. His epistemology allowed only for probabilities. Even though revealed religion supplied enormous probabilities so that one could attain to some assurance, nevertheless one could only deduce the probability and not the absolute certainty of faith and salvation. Gill occasionally says some things against this position without naming Butler.

Now Gill followed mainstream Puritanism rather than Crisp on this point. He explicitly denies that full assurance is essential to saving faith, even though such an assurance was possible at a later time.⁷ Assurance was a reflex of faith but not necessarily instantaneous. Gill describes the psychology of the believing soul:

5. E.g., Flavel, Works, vol.III, p.556; Skepp, p.40; Miller, New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century, p.370. Cf. Chapter X.

6. On the Wesleyan doctrine of assurance, see Coppedge, pp.151-152; Crow, p.71; Fuhrman, pp.279-282.

7. Body, pp.72, 517, 741-742; S & T¹, vol.I, p.363; S & T², vol.II, pp.226, 403; Comm on II Peter 1:1. On the doctrine of assurance from the Hyper-Calvinist perspective, see: Hussey, The Gospel-Feast, pp.104-107; Brine, Treatise, Chapter VI; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, pp.186-192; Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.III, pp.13-21; Huntington, Works, vol.IX, pp.343-389; Hazelton, Sermons, pp.236-247; Styles, Manual, pp.308-317; Pink, Studies in Saving Faith; Election and Justification, pp.116-141. The divergent views of the Hoeksemas are found in Herman Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, pp.221-236; Dogmatics, pp.548-549; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.199-217, 697-725. Toon gives a helpful summary in HC, pp.126-127. Chauncey's views bear mentioning (Neonomianism, Part II, pp.311-336).

... faith at first is such a venture of the soul on Christ, not knowing as yet how it will fare with it ... so sensible sinners, seeing their perishing condition, resolve to venture on Christ; if he saves them it is well, if not they can but die, so they must without him.⁸

Saving faith does indeed include assent to propositions but is much more.⁹ This is what Gill meant by his statement, "Faith stands much in the same place in things spiritual, as reason does in things natural".¹⁰ Faith is spiritual, reason is natural. There are analogies to be made between faith and reason without going to the extremes of either natural theology or mysticism. Faith is according to 'right reason' (sic) and is, as Skepp said, "the most rational act that the soul is capable of" and is "the result of reason, as enlightened and subjected to Divine Revelation".¹¹

This is the doctrine of illumination. According to this viewpoint, God reveals Himself propositionally but spiritually in Scripture, which revelation is then applied to the elect by the same Spirit which inspired Scripture. The Spirit quickens the soul and opens the eyes of his spiritual mind by grace. As a result, a man necessarily sees and believes. In this sense seeing is believing and believing is seeing. Saving faith is the perception that one has already been justified.¹² Faith sees. It is not blind faith. Gill rejected the notion of blind faith

8. Body, p.737. So too Popham, Sermons, vol.I, pp.35-36; Hale, Catechism, p.65. Philpot and especially Warburton often speak of faith as the attitude, "Who can tell? What have I to lose?" They pattern this after Esther entering the presence of Ahasuerus. Thus, faith is basically an experiment (cf. Kendall, p.9). On Experimentalism, see Chapter X.

9. Comm on Rom. 10:10; S & T², vol.II, p.407; Body, pp.731-732; Skepp, pp.37, 45; Huntington, Works, vol.XV, p.100; Dell, Works, pp.314-315; Ames, Narrow, pp.80, 82; Hoeksema, TK, vol.I, pp.320-321; vol.II, p.348; Good Pleasure, p.205. Apparently rebuking Fuller's idea of Duty-Faith, which Hypers thought taught that saving faith is but assent, Gadsby warned that the mere faith of assent can lead to presumption (Works, vol.II, pp.275-276, 289-290. Cf. vol.I, p.285). Yet Fuller denied that faith is merely assent (Underwood, p.191).

10. S & T², vol.III, pp.23-24. See Chapter II above for the Hyper view of reason. Eaton often described faith as mystical since it is "wrought, seen, and apprehended above reason, sense and feeling" (Honeycombe, pp.36, 51, 78, 96, etc.). Cf. Dell, Works, p.341. On mysticism see Chapter X below. Pink claimed that "Saving faith transcends all reason" (Seven Sayings, p.37), and he put forth this challenge: "If some of the 'hypers' prefer reasoning to the actings of faith, let us meet them on their own ground for a moment and give them some questions to exercise their minds upon" (Practical Christianity, p.215).

11. Skepp, Divine Energy, pp.46, 50.

12. DJ, p.61; S & T², vol.II, p.401; Brine, EJ, pp.11-12; Skepp, pp.48-49. See Chapter VI.

which would later be put forth by Kierkegaard. In an ironic refutation of the rationalism of Deism Gill sarcastically asks, "Who would be willing with Hobbes the Atheist, to take a leap in the dark?"¹³ However, this 'leap in the dark' is not to be entirely identified with the quasi-mystical faith of Kierkegaard per se but rather with the spiritually blind rationalism of Deism. To Gill the Deists acted solely upon natural sight and reason, hence their spiritual acts of 'faith' were not directed toward God or revelation. Instead they moved further into darkness. For Gill, faith is not irrational but supra-rational, it is a transcendent 'right reason'. Faith is a leap into the light, not into the dark. This does not negate what he previously said above about the venture of a soul. Says Gill, "what the eye is to the body, that is faith to the soul ... faith is to the soul, as the hand is to the body".¹⁴

The tension is between God and His holy revelation on the one hand, and man and his sinful will on the other. The battle is fought in the mind of man. On the one hand a sinner knows that the Gospel revelation is true, but until he actually completes the process of faith he does not know that it has fully applied to him. He knows that the basis of faith is true but does not as yet know that the superstructure is true and actual. One could, we suppose, see the actual-virtual scheme in this yet again. That is, saving faith actually knows that the Gospel is true but only virtually knows that it has been applied personally to him with effect. But Gill does not specifically draw this analogy. He does, however, insist that there is a minimum amount of knowledge necessary in saving faith:

Faith in Christ, is not a blind and explicit thing, a faith in an object unknown; no, it is in a known object. Faith and knowledge go together! Where the one is, the other is also. Though there may be, and is, faith in an unseen Christ ... yet an unknown Christ can never be the object of faith ... There is an external knowledge and hearing that is necessary, even to a bare assent, before any can know or believe in him ... so there is a special knowledge necessary to special faith. And as a man's knowledge is, so is his faith ... And as his knowledge increases, so does

13. S & T¹, vol.I, p.469. More recent High and Hyper-Calvinists have opposed the views of Neo-Orthodox Calvinism on similar grounds.

14. Body, p.204, and often. Philpot: "faith is the hand to receive and the eye to see this divine testimony" (Sermons, vol.II, p.12), and "Faith is that eye of the soul" (vol.IX, p.28). Philpot and others often emphasize "the difference between the eye of faith and the eye of sense" (vol. VI, p.55).

his faith.¹⁵

In this sense, "Assurance, in some degree or other of it, is essential to faith", though attended by various kinds and degrees of doubt.¹⁶ The ground of assurance is the object of faith itself - Christ, the Gospel, and ultimately the divine decrees. A regenerated man sees Christ and necessarily believes, and this faith has a double confidence: that Christ is all-sufficient for salvation and that Christ is suited to the believer's own personal need.¹⁷ Christ is thus revealed in the Gospel, in which God "does not leave men at uncertainties about things".¹⁸ Divine testimony is sure, not merely probable.

Since justification, regeneration and faith are personal, so too is assurance. Therefore personal self-examination is necessary to attain this full assurance. Gill lists six marks which a saint must look for in his soul in order to reach assurance: (1) "a true sense of sin, sorrow and repentance for it"; (2) "the true grace of faith"; (3) "good works"; (4) "love to Christ"; (5) "whether he is sound in the doctrine of faith"; (6) "whether Christ is in him, whether he is revealed to him, and in him, as God's way of salvation, and the hope of glory: whether he is formed in his soul".¹⁹

This is typical of Federalism. A simple syllogism is set up: Only

15. S & T¹, vol.II, p.405 (cf. p.410). Hussey: "Away with your Blind Faith upon Acts of coming to you don't know whom, or what!" (Glory, p.296). Like Gill's statement above, Hussey is countering the Deist idea of 'leap in the dark'. Since Deism is considered to be the result of Arminianism, these rebukes also apply to Arminians to a lesser extent.

16. DJ, pp.76-77. Philpot: "Faith, I believe, has in it always a measure of assurance. For what is assurance? It is merely the larger growth and fuller development of faith. The nature of assurance is much misunderstood. It is often considered something distinct from faith. This is not the case" (Sermons, vol.IX, p.20). Moreover, "Assurance in Scripture is not confined to faith; there is 'the full assurance of understanding' ... and of hope" (ibid., p.21). One can have faith and hope without assurance, adds Philpot, for hope precedes assurance (vol.III, p.39). Cf. Popham, Sermons, vol.I, pp.247-248. Gadsby: "I believe a child of God may have the full assurance of faith in some branches of divine truth, and yet at the same time, believe he has not one grain of faith" (Sermons, pp.227-228).

17. DJ, pp.76-77.

18. Comm on Heb. 13:9. Even Popham admits that "a guessing religion is dreadful" (Sermons, vol.II, p.77).

19. Comm on I Cor. 11:28. Cf. S & T¹, vol.I, p.44; S & T², vol.II, pp.167, 226; Body, pp.72, 191; Comm on Judges 13:23; Brine, Grace at the Sovereign Disposal of God, pp.24-25; Skepp, pp.55-56. Note the use of the word 'reason' in the texts of these citations. See similarly Wayman, Enquiry, pp.90-93.

regenerated persons have the marks of grace in them; I have the marks of grace in me; therefore I am a regenerated person. These marks are found in the elect only after regeneration. No man can know if he is elect until he is regenerated and actually believes.²⁰ Similarly, no man can know if he is reprobate. In this syllogism, most evident are the marks concerning sanctification. Hence it has sometimes been called the 'Syllogism of Sanctification' or the 'Practical Syllogism'.

This has always been debated in Reformed circles. Of particular controversy has been the use of the Law in attaining assurance. Now Gill followed mainstream Puritanism in holding that there was indeed an acceptable use of the Law in this regard, though this was down-played by the Gospel Standard Baptists in the nineteenth century.²¹ Wesley and Fuller also accepted its use.²² We must be especially careful in quotations from all writers in this area. Quotations out of context could falsely indicate either Pelagianism or extreme practical Antinomianism. For instance, Gill himself could be mistaken as an Arminian by his statement that "Sanctification is absolutely necessary to salvation".²³ This does not mean that works are essential to gaining salvation, though sanctification concerns works. A saint works because he is saved. Anybody who does not have works is not saved; all saints necessarily have good works; no saint can live in perpetual sin and never have good works.²⁴ If one does not have good works, therefore, he can but conclude that he is not saved. This does not necessitate the reverse, that all who have good works are saved. A man may have outward good works without the correct motives. If a man has good works with good motives, it is a contributing mark of grace. But this mark alone cannot grant assurance. On the other hand, Gill leaves it

20. Comm on John 1:12; Body, p.191; Sawyer, p.102. Furthermore, "If a man is not elect ... then he cannot possibly have the assurance of being elect" (Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.200).

21. Hussey: "From the Knowledge of our Sanctification springs this knowledge of our election, and from the Knowledge of our election springs up assurance" (Gospel-Feast, p.105). Note, however, that this was the early Hussey. Hoeksema wavers on this point. In one place he teaches that sanctification is a means of gaining assurance (TK, vol.II, p.226), but elsewhere he writes that "We must therefore never say that faith is assured by good works. For faith is itself assurance" (vol.III, p.48).

22. Coppedge, pp.151-152; Fuller, Works, p.300.

23. Body, p.559.

24. Comm on Job 31:2, James 2:18. Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.31.

open whether a saint can have assurance when he sins. The Puritans tended to deny that assurance is possible while a saint sins, but Crisp sometimes implies that a saint may have assurance even when he sins.

As to the use of the Law in assurance, it has often been asked, "Does not the Law only condemn? Can a believer look to the Law and receive anything but condemnation? Will not one's search for marks of sanctification by the Law only rob him of assurance?" Kendall has contended that Calvin taught that the Law had a subsidiary place at best in granting assurance and probably no place at all. The Antinomians saw the problem and rejected the Syllogism of Sanctification. Crisp argued that the Syllogism has validity only if a person has perfect obedience, but since no saint has this degree of sanctification the Law has no use in assurance. Neither does the existence of sincerity and love give assurance, for these too relate to the Law and are meant to give evidence to others and not to self. Besides, he argued, even Papists, sectarians and prostitutes love their own number - and they certainly are not saints.²⁵ Saltmarsh and even Keach reasoned along similar lines.²⁶

The Antinomians argued that the only true evidence of regeneration is the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. The Puritans and even Wesley accepted this as a means of assurance but they added that it is not the only means. In this Gill followed the Puritans against the Antinomians.²⁷ However, when viewed closely, the three schools (High, Hyper- and Antinomian Calvinism) are quite similar and Hyper-Calvinism was something of an overlap of the other two. To say that the Antinomians stressed the Spirit's testimony does not mean that they were practical Antinomians in the sense that they taught that sanctification is unimportant or that a saint can live in continual sin. Conversely, it is also untrue to suppose that the Puritans taught that the Spirit's testimony occupied only a subservient place in assurance, when in fact they taught that both sanctification and the Spirit's testimony were necessary. Gill also followed them in teaching that the Spirit's testimony was essential to assurance.²⁸

25. Crisp, CAE, vol.II, pp.66-68, 74-78.

26. Saltmarsh, Free Grace, pp.53ff; Keach, Marrow, p.3. The later Hussey warned that marks of sanctification can be misleading (Glory, pp.762-771).

27. Kendall is mistaken on this point (John Cotton, p.48).

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Calvin gave much prominence to this doctrine of the Spirit's testimony.²⁹ It also received considerable attention from John Cotton, who in some ways bordered on doctrinal Antinomianism. The American Antinomians of the 1630's taught it, as did the English Antinomians of the 1640's, and both placed a greater stress on it than was to be found in all previous Reformed theology. The Quakers and other mystics have regularly emphasized it in their teaching and we may see here something of a 'mystical Calvinism' or a 'Calvinist mysticism' (see Chapter X). Among English Antinomians, Saltmarsh and Eaton stressed it and most Hyper-Calvinists have taught it.³⁰ Saltmarsh and Davis, however, differed somewhat from Crisp's extremes and denied that full assurance was of the immediate essence of faith, though their positions are still higher than those of the Puritans and even Gill. Saltmarsh taught that the seed of assurance was inherent in faith and is brought to light by exercise of faith itself:

We ought to beleeve till we be perswaded that we do beleeve, because the more we do beleeve, the more we shall be perswaded to beleeve ... nor are we to stay our beleeving till we be assured by some signes that we do beleeve; we must beleeve that we may know that we do beleeve; for the witness comes by beleeving.³¹

Some of the higher Federalists approached this (Rutherford, for

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28. E.g., Cause, pp.60, 138; S & T¹, vol.I, p.362; Body, pp.72, 191, 545; Comm on Rom. 8:9, 8:16, II Peter 1:10, I John 3:24, 4:13. Popham held that the Spirit's testimony is essential to all faith, but he added that this is not assurance; assurance comes later at sealing (Sermons, vol. III, p.158). Gadsby implied that the internal testimony is not of the essence of faith, for not all believers have strong faith and Christians must strive for the inner witness (Works, vol.I, pp.300-309; vol.II, p.93).

29. On Calvin see: Lane, 'Calvin and Assurance'; Kendall, Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649; Helm, Calvin; Chalker, Calvin and Some Seventeenth Century English Calvinists, pp.53-86; Foxgrover, 'Temporary Faith and the Certainty of Salvation'.

30. See Hussey, Glory, p.232; Gospel-Feast, pp.111-112; Davis, Truth, p.90; Johnson, Riches, vol.II, pp.281-365; Pink, Holy Spirit, pp.116-121; Election and Justification, pp.120ff. Speaking of the seventeenth century Antinomians, Toon says: "Another favourite emphasis was the teaching that the only sure way for a Christian to know he was elect was the voice of the Spirit within his soul saying, 'You are elect'" (HC, p.28). This is probably an exaggeration on Toon's part, for we have found no instances in which any of the Antinomians felt that the Spirit's testimony came in this specific way. Even so, he is correct in pointing out that it is essential to Hyper-Calvinism that true assurance comes via the testimony of the Spirit in relation to election (HC, pp.144-145). See Solt, (pp.33, 41, 69) for the Antinomians.

31. Saltmarsh, Free Grace, pp.95, 98. Cf. pp.53ff.

example, even though he was one of the bitterest opponents of Antinomianism). But it was Crisp who took the most extreme position within the Reformed tradition. For him assurance was of the essence of faith because of "the reality of the thing". That is, "There is a light in faith that discovers itself unto men".³² There is a self-authenticating witness in saving faith. Faith is but a gift of the Spirit and it could even be said that it is the Spirit Himself believing through us. The Spirit testifies of our personal interest in the Covenant. The Spirit always and necessarily bears witness through faith. There is no faith without this testimony nor any testimony without faith. And this testimony necessitates assurance. The reason a man does not have assurance is because he does not have faith. The reason a saint may lack assurance is because he may not be exercising faith at that moment, though Crisp left it open whether a saint may have assurance even when in sin because the Spirit remains within him and the seed of faith is still there.

The Spirit's testimony, wrote Crisp, is neither dependant upon nor divorced from the believer's faith.³³ Faith is the echo of the Spirit's testimony.³⁴ This testimony cannot be doubted; it is necessary and effectual; all believers and only believers have it. This is so because the Spirit's testimony is the final authority in matters of faith and knowledge and as such is the basic epistemological presupposition of faith. It is appropriate that we again quote Crisp's important explanation:

... as in all arts and sciences, there are some principles that are ground works therein, beyond which there must be no enquiry, so also in divine things, in answering cases of conscience, there must be some principle that must be as the last determining principle, beyond which there must be no further enquiry, nor questioning: as, when a man heareth something that is probable, to clear it up, he would have something to come in that should make that certain, and so satisfy him concerning it. Now that which is the last principle and ground of things, as something there must be, when that comes, a man must be satisfied with that, and question no further concerning the thing, or else he shall never be resolved: so I say to the case in

32. Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.115. Cf. Popham, Sermons, vol.III, p.158.

33. CAE, vol.II, pp.79, 101.

34. CAE, vol.II, pp.101, 107-108. Hence, for faith to say "Christ died for me", the Spirit must make the 'bold proclamation' that "Christ died for you". But problems arise concerning the Gospel and limited atonement. See Chapter IX.

hand, if I would be resolved concerning my interest in Christ, I must take for granted some principle or other, beyond which I must not question, or else there will be question upon question; and so a running ad infinitum ... is there any thing in the world of better credit, or rather to be believed, than the Spirit himself? Nay, can any believe but by him?³⁵

According to Crisp the Spirit's testimony is "the great evidence ... which at last determines the question". When the Spirit speaks, "there shall be never an objection".³⁶ When Crisp says that this is "the Spirit himself" he refers to Romans 8:16 and describes the testimony as "immediate" and "without any instrument".³⁷ These phrases, however, must be interpreted in the light of Crisp's penchant for using overly-literal phraseology. He does not divorce the Spirit's testimony from Scripture (nor did the Puritans or Gill).³⁸ "Immediate" means that the Scriptures are the very words of the Spirit of God Himself and that when He gives the internal testimony He gives it through the Scriptures, which are verbally inspired and powerful.³⁹ Had Crisp or Gill or any other Calvinist suggested that the Spirit's testimony can be heard apart from the Scriptures, they would have been guilty of the charge of rank mysticism that has often been levelled against them (especially Crisp).⁴⁰ These were days when Quakers and 'Enthusiasts' (fanatics) were held in widespread ecclesiastical disdain and all forms of mysticism were shunned. Nevertheless there has always been a devotional aspect of Federalism, which is brought out especially in its teaching on the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit.

35. CAE, vol.II, pp.91-92. See Chapter II above. Hoeksema echoes these sentiments: "After all, there is only one that can give us the assurance that we are saved, and that is God Himself; there can only be one ground of such assurance, and that is the Word of God" (IK, vol.II, p.225).

36. CAE, vol.II, pp.82-83.

37. CAE, vol.II, pp.79, 87.

38. CAE, vol.II, p.90; Gill, Body, p.545; S & T, vol.I, p.363; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.548-549. Assurance does not come from introspection, guilt feelings, or inner voices (IK, vol.II, p.224). Homer Hoeksema: "this assurance is not obtainable by a curious prying into the secret and deep things of God" (Voice, p.203). Similarly, Stevens: "It is absolutely impossible for any creature to know more than what His Maker is pleased to discover unto him" (Help, vol.I, p.207). Philpot says that assurance through the Word "excludes everything visionary and fanatical" (Sermons, vol.IX, p.11. Cf. vol.III, p.102).

39. Cf. CAE, vol.II, pp.292-293.

40. Cf. Crisp, CAE, vol.II, p.89; Hussey, Glory, pp.232-233; Fuller, Works, p.300; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.204-205; 705-715. On mysticism and 'Enthusiasm', see Chapter X below.

Crisp taught that full assurance was of the essence of faith. Any man who has never had assurance, we must presume, has never had true faith. Some proponents of this position sometimes point to Romans 4:19-22, in which it is stated that Abraham was justified "being fully persuaded" or assured. Was not Abraham in a position of assurance from the first time he believed? Is not his faith the pattern for other believers?

Now the Puritans and Gill admitted that in some sense a measure of assurance is of the essence of faith. That is, faith inherently trusts in the reliability and truth of the Gospel without reservation. Saving faith has assurance as to the reliability of its foundation. What is at question is the assurance about one's possession of true faith and salvation. It may also be put like this: in saving faith a man necessarily knows that the Gospel is true but he does not necessarily know that he believes. The degree of consciousness is at stake but especially the object. In saving faith, all admit, one needs to know that Christ is able to save, etc. Faith, therefore, initially looks to Christ, not self. Federalists usually speak of personal assurance as a reflex or reaction of faith according to this pattern.

What, then, is debated? We may put it like this: The Puritans and Gill taught that a length of time may and usually does pass between the action and reaction of faith, whereas Crisp contended that no time at all passes. Both schools agree that illumination of the soundness of the Gospel precedes faith but accept that this is but the chronology of logic, since such illumination necessarily and immediately produces faith. There does not appear to be any significant difference here. The point at issue is the reflex of faith and assurance.

Some representatives of the Puritan view charge the Crispian exponents with presumption and mysticism, whereas Crispian sometimes accuse those holding the Puritan view with misrepresenting Biblical faith and substituting intellectual assent for spiritual faith or making faith a leap in the dark. The Crispian are charged with requiring too much of a man, the Puritans too little; the former are said to deny the salvation of many, the latter to be too liberal with who is a believer. On the other hand, the Crispian are sometimes represented as being too free with their emphasis on the subjective, opening the door to mysticism and minimizing the necessity of sanctification and sound

doctrine. Similarly, the reply is that the Puritan view makes assurance unobtainable to any because they specify too many 'marks'. The Crispians are labelled as sectarian since they would reject all who have never had personal assurance, whereas the Puritans are characterised as teaching that there are two kinds of Christians (those with and those without assurance). In the end, representatives sometimes resort to polemics, charging the Crispians with practical Antinomianism and the Puritans with legalism. And in some cases these last charges are correct, since some exponents live consistently with their opponents' charges merely out of reactionary spite.

Crisp basically taught that faith is incompatible with doubt. A Christian may indeed doubt, but that occurs only when he is not believing. But even then Crisp may have caged this with the view that the reflex is the same as the foundation and therefore remains even when a believer sins. Opponents query: "Well, then, does this not teach that a Christian never sins, since he never doubts?" Our examination of this must wait till our chapter on Antinomianism, but we will mention that even Crisp mentions a growth in assurance and denies Perfectionism.

The Puritans and Gill also taught a growth in assurance but differed from Crisp. For them a man grows in faith until he attains to assurance, then he grows in assurance. Few Puritans or Hyper-Calvinists taught the post-conversional experience which has been popularised in recent years by D.M. Lloyd-Jones.⁴¹ According to this theory, a believer can indeed grow in faith but the attainment of assurance is sudden, gracious, and sovereign. This experience is called the sealing of the Spirit, and opponents say that it is based upon the faulty Authorized Version translation of Ephesians 1:13. Curiously R.T. Kendall (Lloyd-Jones' pastoral successor) holds to this position while simultaneously teaching that assurance is of the essence of faith. This view was rejected by the mainstream Puritans. It would seem to be

41. Cf. Lloyd-Jones, God's Ultimate Purpose and Romans: The Sons of God. Goodwin taught that sealing was a second experience, and Ames seems to have taught something similar (Marrow, p.167).

The theory has been espoused amongst Hyper-Calvinists by Philpot, Meditations, vol.III, pp.80-84; Popham, Sermons, vol.II, p.23; Styles, Manual, p.311; Pink, Holy Spirit, pp.131-134; John M'Kenzie, Believing and Sealing. There is no special reason why it should be popular with Supralapsarians. It is similar to, but not to be equated with, the Arminian Perfectionist doctrine, the Anglican Confirmation doctrine, and the Pentecostal Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

the logical conclusion of the Federal view that assurance is not of the essence of faith but must be "attained to". It must be remembered, however, that these same Federalists generally taught that, as initial salvation and faith are not necessarily sudden and instantaneous, so too assurance is not sudden and instantaneous.

Gill and many Puritans spoke of assurance in terms of one's knowing that Christ died personally for oneself in particular. This is the 'plerophory' of faith and assurance, the pinnacle, though even when it is reached a Christian grows in the appreciation of it. Gill: "The first act of faith ... is not to believe that Christ died for them".⁴² This was the position of Owen, Fisher's Marrow of Modern Divinity, Alverey Jackson, Philpot, Pink, Spurgeon and many others.⁴³ Most Puritans probably held to it. It is the logical deduction of the doctrine of limited atonement, as we shall see in Chapter IX. If this part of faith is the culmination or zenith of faith, it cannot be part of the essence of faith. Therefore, it is argued, a man does not have to believe that Christ died for him in particular in order to be saved.⁴⁴

Arminians and Low Calvinists often argue that this negates the Gospel offer. Are not men required to believe that Christ died for them? Does not this error take the Cross out of the Gospel? It is sometimes replied by High and Hyper-Calvinists that a man need only believe that Christ died for some people (the elect) and that he may be one of those if he believes. Critics contend that this makes assurance impossible, for the very foundation (Christ and His work) is tampered with. Even some of the Antinomians suggested that faith in a personal atonement is necessary to faith and salvation.⁴⁵ How else can one know that God loves him, for personal atonement is the fullest demonstration of divine

42. Body, p.468; Cause, p.32; S & I¹, vol.I, p.362. The term 'plerophory' as a synonym for 'full assurance' can be found in many Puritans, Antinomians and Hyper-Calvinists. For example, see Eaton, Honeycombe, p.155; Hussey, Gospel-Feast, pp.106-107; Witsius, Economy, vol.I, p.342.

43. Owen, Works, vol.X, pp.409-410; Marrow of Modern Divinity, p.128; Jackson, Question, pp.11-12; Philpot, Sermons, vol.X, pp.56, 120; Pink, Atonement, pp.288, 307; Spurgeon, quoted in Thornton, p.136. Gadsby wavered on this point. Sometimes he implies that the Gal. 2:20 "for me" confession is of the essence of saving faith (see Sermons, pp.90, 94-95, 316, 334-335). Hoeksema, on the other hand, follows the Heidelberg position. Of saving faith he comments: "It means that I am confident that He died for me" (Whosoever Will, p.114. Cf. p.127).

44. So Gill, Cause, p.32, and often.

45. E.g., Saltmarsh, Free Grace, p.192; Skepp, p.48.

grace? Sometimes the reply is that salvation is indeed by grace but that does not necessarily include the perception of the particular aspects of grace. Again it is asked, does not this view of personal assurance depend more on the reasoning within one's mind rather than upon the testimony of God's Word and the internal testimony of the Spirit? The assurance syllogism (a compound syllogism) is constructed thus: Christ died only for the elect; all those who believe are elect; I believe; therefore I am elect and Christ died for me. Gill put it like this:

Have you any reason to believe that you have, at any time, had communion with God, or in the house of God, under any ordinance, either the ministry of the word, or prayer, or the supper of the Lord? Then you may be assured Christ has made satisfaction for you; or you would never have enjoyed such communion.⁴⁶

According to this system, the order is faith-election-atonement, rather than faith-atonement-election. One comes to the Cross through the decrees rather than directly. There are important implications here for the offer question. Low Calvinists might reply that, if a syllogism is necessary at all, it must be this one: Christ died for all; whoever believes in Christ and the atonement will be saved; whoever is saved is elect; I believe in Christ and the atonement, therefore I am saved and elect. Thus one reaches election through atonement. This is not to say that only after faith is one elected. Quite the contrary. The historical order of the application of salvation is the opposite of that preceding faith, viz: election-atonement-faith (eternity, historical foundation, historical acceptance and application), then we see it reverse into faith-atonement-election (faith in the atonement brings assurance of election). But this is not the Supralapsarian reversal of history.

Gill's quotation above seems at first sight to ground assurance only in the marks of grace, but this is not quite true. Elsewhere he explicitly says that "The ground and foundation of this trust in Christ, arises from his proper deity" and also that the blood of Christ is "the Ground and foundation of all assurance".⁴⁷ And elsewhere he again adds the Gospel to the foundation:

46. S & T¹, vol.I, p.303. Cf. also pp.313, 332.

47. S & T², vol.II, pp.403, 411.

... by the light of nature, it is not certain that God will pardon men upon repentance; 'tis only probable or possible he may ... nor the law of Moses ... it is only by the Gospel revelation that any can be assured that God will forgive, even penitent sinners.⁴⁸

Gill, then, does not say that sanctification or marks are the final ground of assurance. Christ's deity and blood, as revealed in the Gospel, are the ultimate grounds of assurance. These are inseparable from sanctification as cause and effect.

Previously we noted that Gill considered justification to be the object of faith rather than its result. This is another way of saying that the ground of faith is in the Gospel of justification. The Gospel proclaims that the elect are justified. According to Solt, the Antinomians taught that "If faith followed justification, the saints possessed even greater certitude of salvation".⁴⁹ This is a correct evaluation of how the Antinomians saw it. According to this theory, a man realizes that he is already justified and if so then his justification is not at all dependant on his faith. His justification is already accomplished. His faith depends on his justification, not vice-versa. Faith is but realizing that one is already perfectly justified.⁵⁰

Many critics replied that if this were so, then practical Antinomianism necessarily followed, though it would not be encouraged by the proponents themselves. If a man knew beyond any doubt that he was already justified, would he not sin all the more? This is the charge of some Roman Catholics denying all assurance and some Arminians denying the assurance of preservation. The reply is that sanctifying grace is inherent in faith and assurance. Grace sanctifies and restrains.

Crisp firmly grounded assurance in the Spirit's testimony and this is related to justification before faith. The key here is his view of the nature of faith and justification as gifts. They are given as deeds of gift. This brings in the nature of grace, the Covenant and the offer,

48. Comm on Jonah 3:9. Comparisons with Butler are obvious.

49. Solt, p.41.

50. Cf. Davis, Truth, p.13; Rehokosht, p.14; Kendall, p.187. This was strongly rejected by, among others, Baxter, Works, vol.II, pp.154-155; Goodwin, Works, vol.VIII, p.211. See Chapter VI, Section D.

all of which contribute to the ground and nature of assurance. Note the following extract from Crisp:

... the best way for any man to know whether Christ be his or no, is to consider the conveyance in which he is made over to men; see the terms of conveyance, and according to these terms, such is the security of your title. Now the terms of conveyance (as I have often told you) are only such as in a deed of gift, and a deed of gift universally exhibited and reached out. Therefore, I must tell you, there is no better way to know your portion in Christ, than upon the general tender of the gospel, to conclude absolutely he is yours, and so, without any more ado, to take him, as tendered to you, on his word; and this taking of him, upon a general tender, is the greatest security in the world, that Christ is yours.⁵¹

This is a significant paragraph for several reasons. Firstly, when he says that this is 'the best way' he is not negating what he elsewhere says about the Spirit's testimony being the final authority. He may be resorting to his overly-literal rhetoric, in which 'the best way' simply means 'a good way'. But it is more likely that what he means is that the Spirit's testimony is not to be separated from the nature of the offer of the Gospel. The inner testimony echoes, and gives personal assurance to, the outer testimony which is the Gospel. And the Gospel relates how Christ is given. Secondly, when he speaks of 'deed of gift' he has the eternal Covenant in mind. That Covenant is an unconditional testament of pure promise. Thirdly, and most interestingly, he grounds assurance in the 'general tender of the gospel'. This phrase was regularly identified with the 'free offer', which was accepted by Puritans but rejected by Hyper-Calvinists. Crisp, then, held to a 'free offer' in the sense of 'deed of gift' which is 'universally exhibited' (i.e., proclaimed). And he grounds faith and assurance in it. If there were no 'general tender', there can be no assurance.

Now this is similar to what the Puritans and Low Calvinists argued. Low and High Calvinists have often said that the Hyper-Calvinist rejection of the free offer denied the possibility of assurance. Arminians also agreed and sometimes added that no man can believe in the first place without a free offer. It would seem, then, that on this point the

51. Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.114. Cf. John Edwards, Crispianism Unmasked, pp.29-30. Young: "The antinomian doctrine of assurance, far from being hyper-Calvinistic, is bound up with the conception of the free offer to 'sinners as sinners', without any qualifications resulting from a preparatory work of the Holy Spirit" (Encyclopedia of Christianity, vol.I, p.277).

Antinomians were closer to the Low and High Calvinists than were the Hyper-Calvinists. On the other hand, the Hyper-Calvinists contended that a free offer actually negated the possibility of assurance rather than provided it. For them, the free offer implied universal atonement. If Christ died for all, and some go to Hell (which all parties concerned are agreed upon), then how can any person be assured that he too will not go to Hell even if he believes? This is the logical outcome of holding that faith is but a gift and evidence of justification rather than a means or instrument of justification. The point at dispute is really whether the free offer implied (or necessitated) universal atonement. The Antinomians and High Calvinists denied universal atonement but still gave the free offer, howbeit in slightly different ways. Low Calvinists and Arminians gave a free offer and accepted universal atonement. And Hyper-Calvinists rejected both the free offer and universal atonement.

There is also the question about the assurance of the faith of others. Can a person, whether sinner or saint, know that another person believes and is a saint? If so, how? It is agreed by all writers of each of the relevant schools that it is impossible to know whether an unregenerate man is elected, for he may yet believe. No man can know either the election or reprobation of himself or another until faith is involved. But this is not at issue. The question, rather, is whether one can know if another has faith. If I have faith, is there any way in which I can prove it to others? If another man says that he has faith, are there certain marks to look for which will give full assurance to me that he does indeed have faith? Gill followed almost all other Calvinists in holding that such an assurance is impossible. This may be because of his views of the Spirit's testimony, which is said to be given to the individual and, presumably, not to others. The Spirit's testimony is personal, individual and secret.⁵² On the other hand, if a regenerate man exercises his faith in good works other men will see it and can deduce that he is probably regenerated.⁵³

52. Cf. Comm on Eccl. 9:1.

53. Cause, p.60; Comm on II Peter 1:10; S & T¹, vol.I, p.586; Body, p.191; Crisp, CAE, vol.II, pp.75-78; Dell, Works, pp.164-165, 435-436; Pink, Holy Spirit, pp.131, 139; Article XXII of the Gospel Standard Articles. Hoeksema feels that the testimony that other Christians give to us that we are believers is a means of our gaining personal assurance ourselves. See IK, vol.II, pp.226-228. Hoeksema also says that Kuyper held that Baptists cannot really determine which persons are regenerate, for they cannot see into people's hearts. See Believers, p.53. Huntington held that marks of reprobation and the unpardonable sin are sometimes discernable (Works, vol.XII, pp.400-401). Omega lists three necessary factors in determining whether another person

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This raises several questions. First, Gill was a Baptist and baptized only believers. He probably evaded the obvious difficulty by requiring only a credible profession of faith and some degree of outward marks but not seeking an internal testimony.⁵⁴ This also applies to church membership, the Lord's Table and marriage.

Secondly, what about John 13:35: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"? Gill and mainstream Puritanism fail to see the difficulty and can only suggest that this refers only to probability or that it means that we cannot deduce anything positive about a person's spirituality unless there is love present.⁵⁵ They do not feel that this text teaches that there is a self-authenticating witness in the nature of true love, as many Low Calvinists affirm.

One sometimes gets the impression that Hyper-Calvinists such as Gill actually shun the doctrine of assurance. They may say that faith is the highest virtue but in practice it appears that they viewed humility and resignation to deterministic sovereignty as the chief virtues. They interject the hiddenness of God's secret will into the doctrine of faith in such a way that faith is one's being humble without being bold. It is bold presumption to say "I believe and I know that I am one of the elect and that Christ died for me". Cannot only God say who is elect? This shows itself in the Hyper-Calvinist rejection of the free offer. Those who say that they are seekers are more discouraged by warnings of presumption than encouraged by invitations of grace. A true seeker, after all, will be given the faith to persevere anyway.

Low Calvinists contend that both High and Hyper-Calvinism breed doubts about assurance because of two things: the total rejection of the whole idea of a free offer by Hypers and the virtual rejection of it by

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is regenerate: a right knowledge of the way of salvation, a state of mind submissive to and trusting in the sovereign will of God, and union with the people of God (Doctrine, p.5). Some felt that it was a distinctive tenet of Antinomianism to be able to discern who are and who are not Christians. See (Anonymous), A Declaration Against the Antinomians, p.8.

54. Comm on I Cor. 11:28, etc.

55. Cf. Comm on John 13:35.

High Calvinists who say they give an offer but not a full free offer because they reject universal atonement. How can one be assured that God will forgive all who believe in Christ if Christ did not in fact die for all men? And if a rigid doctrine of reprobation is accepted, what are the chances of one's being elect? Very slim indeed. The effect on the individual can be psychologically devastating.

Many Low Calvinists also think that Hyper-Calvinists dangle faith and assurance before their listeners as delectable but unobtainable prizes. Some critics even say that this is cruel. They might, for example, point to Philpot's words:

Now no man can bring into his own heart a spiritual, saving knowledge of the Son of God, or give himself faith to embrace Him as the Christ of God, so as to have any assurance that He died for him. He may long to do so, and even attempt to raise up faith in his own bosom; but till the time comes when God is pleased to give some discovery and manifestation of His dear Son to his soul, he cannot see Him; for He hides Himself in the thick darkness; nor can he believe in Him so as to find rest and peace from an assurance of pardoned sin and acceptance in the Beloved.⁵⁶

Note the key words "He may long to do so". That is as much as to say, one may long to believe but is prevented from believing by God. He may long with all his heart to receive faith, assurance and salvation from God, but God may not want to give them. On the one hand, Philpot is saying that one must beg and grovel for a long time in order to receive faith.⁵⁷ On the other hand, Philpot implies that one can remain in this condition indefinitely and never receive what he is

56. Sermons, vol.XI, p.7. Philpot admits that these are "strong assertions" with which many will disagree. But rather than appeal to Scripture for support he only states that "I am very sure that I speak in the fullest harmony with the experience of every living soul in thus speaking; for all such well know that the faith that brings peace is not in their own power, but is the pure sovereign gift of God" (ibid.). Any who disagree are not among the privileged. Gosden agrees that "neither faith nor love is at the command of the child of God" (Baptism, p.13).

57. Philpot often mentions those who wrestle inwardly longing for Christ but do not yet have faith. See, e.g., Sermons, vol.I, p.50; vol.VIII, pp.43-44; vol.IX, p.125; vol.X, pp.176-177. This is Hyper-Calvinist Experimentalism in its purest form. Several of the biographical and autobiographical accounts of Hypers describe nearly to the point of boasting how they grovelled and groaned, crying that they were unworthy to become Christians (see those of Warburton and Tanner, for example). One sometimes gets the impression that the longer and deeper this experience lasts, the greater the spirituality. But critics sometimes contend that it is all a sham, for it does not proceed from faith.

asking for. This is utterly irreconcilable with the notion of a loving God who earnestly desires to give salvation to all who ask, say critics. And Hyper-Calvinists agree. To them, that notion is the basis of the idea of the free offer and they reject it completely. They deny that God wills salvation for all. They deny that God holds out a promise to give certain things, the sole condition being that one merely asks and receives.

Needless to say, Hyper-Calvinists regularly warn against presumption. Many of those who say that they have received grace and assurance are seen as presumptuous - for grace, mercy and assurance must be begged for, not 'claimed'.⁵⁸ "'The claim of faith' is the language not of experience but of presumption", wrote Philpot.⁵⁹ Sinners must not believe nor ask for faith nor claim the promises of God. They must agonize and above all wait, for God hides Himself and keeps them waiting. God reveals Himself in His own good time.⁶⁰ Gadsby: "Do nothing, but sigh, groan, and cry for the pardoning mercy of the Lord, and wait till God takes you in hand".⁶¹

It is important to realize that all this is basically spoken about

58. Philpot, Sermons, vol.X, p.49.

59. Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, p.427. Popham: "Better feel a distressing 'if' than be walking in a presumptuous confidence" (Sermons, vol.IV, p.43). Philpot elaborates: "You may have a strong faith, so called, and it may be nothing but awful presumption: you may have a weak faith, and yet that faith be genuine ... there is often more real faith, more genuine trust, more heart-felt confidence in the poor, exercised, plagued, tempted, distressed people of God than in those who stand upon a lofty pinnacle, who never doubt their interest, and think nothing worthy the name of faith but strong assurance" (Sermons, vol.X, p.125). Cf. ibid., vol.II, pp.78, 82, 102; vol.III, p.71; vol.V, p.98; Huntington Works, vol.XV, pp.280-311; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, pp.193-199; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.211. For all of his warnings against presumption, Popham surprises us by saying that the Devil tells men that it is presumptuous to think Christ will receive them if they will come to Him (Sermons, vol.I, p.10). Some critics feel that this sort of warning would be suitable to Hyperism itself.

60. Paul, Bible Truths, p.153; Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.253; Kershaw, Grace Alone, pp.25, 31. Hemington: "There must be conviction, friends, and then there will be waiting. God is a sovereign. He has a set time to favour Zion ... they must wait, though sometimes it seems to them as if all waiting must come to an end. And God keeps them waiting His own time, and in due season says ... 'Man, thy sins are forgiven thee'" (Memorial of Charles Hemington, pp.74-75). "They may wait a long time", preached Raven, "but they shall not wait upon him in vain" (Sermons, p.126). Popham says to a 'sensible sinner': "don't hurry, don't pretend to be what you are not. You won't as you fear God; but don't hurry. The promise holds good and is quite sure ... Do you think you know better than God?... call upon Him and wait for His promised deliverance" (Sermons, vol.II, pp.136-137).

61. Sermons, p.93. Cf. Vinall, Sermons, pp.62-68.

assurance as well as salvation.⁶² To a certain extent there is no difference. Hyper-Calvinists feel quite strongly that this experience of conviction of sin is the first part of conversion.⁶³ Hence, the one who waits, cries out and goes through all this agony is really a Christian – but without faith and/or assurance.

It is also important to see the exact context in which these Hyper-Calvinist sentiments are expressed. It is obvious to any student of Reformed historical theology that some of the views above can be found, to a certain extent, even in Calvin and the Puritan Calvinists. And yet we must agree with Kendall that Calvin's position is certainly not this fully developed and that Calvin would have disagreed quite strongly with the way in which the High and especially Hyper-Calvinists altered it. If there is disagreement about whether repentance precedes faith in the historical ordo salutis of Federalism, there can be no disagreement that Calvin placed faith before repentance and that the Hypers nearly always reversed this order. It was this reversal that produced the morbid self-examination Experimentalism that breeds more doubt than faith.

It is also granted that Calvin warned against presumption. What Calvinist has not? But Calvin and the Federalists also believed in the free offer and thus placed far more emphasis than did the Hypers on God's willingness to bestow faith and assurance. Thus, Calvin's sarcastic warnings about the Romanist rejection of assurance apply to a certain extent also to the Hyper-Calvinists:

The Papists say that we must doubt it and that we can come to God only with a hope that he will receive us; but to assure ourselves of it – that we ought not to do, for that would be too great a presumption.⁶⁴

A similar rebuke was issued by Pink, who displayed an accurate knowledge of the Hyper-Calvinist psychology of Experimentalism:⁶⁵

It is indeed deplorable that many Protestants have echoed the dogma of Popery that it is presumptuous for any Christian to aver he knows that he has been made a new creature

62. Cf. Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.202.

63. Gospel Standard Article X. See Chapter VIII below.

... Cont'd:

in Christ Jesus.⁶⁶

But here we see Pink's inconsistency, the difficulty in his theology that places him on the borderline between High and Hyper-Calvinism. Pink could rebuke the Hypers and yet he shared their basic position. (For instance, Pink explicitly placed repentance before faith). It appears that Pink was merely repelled by the Experimental excesses of those such as Philpot and Gadsby.

It was indeed Philpot who was most responsible for this deplorable state of affairs. The above-mentioned Experimentalism has sometimes been called 'Philpotism'.⁶⁷ Only in a small way can it be found in Calvin in that Calvin felt that conviction and repentance were necessary to salvation. The Antinomians did not sympathise with the growing Experimentalism in their day (e.g., Shepard and Hooker). Even certain Low Calvinists (e.g., Bunyan) taught a similar Experimentalism. But the High Calvinists emphasized it more than any Protestants before them. Following the Neonomian Controversy the situation did not improve much. Gill went further than the Highs did on the matter, but it really began to take on a precise form under Huntington. Gadsby picked it up from Huntington and then Philpot carried it furthest of all. Pink merely represents the Hyper-Calvinist reaction against Philpotism. He would marshal a return to the Hyper-Calvinism of, say, Gill. But even Pink could not go all the way back to Calvin.

All the warnings about presumption are against anything resembling Arminianism.⁶⁸ Hypers, of course, can hardly sing Charles Wesley's famous hymn: "Bold I approach the eternal throne, and claim the crown

Cont'd:...

64. Sermons on Ephesians, pp.28-29. See Helm, Calvin, p.29.

65. Cf. Murray, Pink, pp.143-149. Pink's own views about the true Experimentalism of salvation are expressed best in The Doctrine of Salvation and Saving Grace.

66. Reconciliation, p.161. Pink elsewhere chides those who feel that it is the height of presumption to consider oneself a Christian. "It is neither fanaticism nor presumption for faith to receive at its face value what God has declared concerning the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice" (Sanctification, p.193. Cf. p.199).

67. See Chapter XII below.

68. One is tempted to suggest that as the Hyper-Calvinists too closely paralleled the Deists on reason and divine transcendence (see Chapters II and III), so they approached the Deists who dismissed as 'Enthusiasts' those who presumptuously claimed to know God.

through Christ my own".⁶⁹ Critics may well add that Hypers cannot honestly follow the mandate of Hebrews 4:16, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need".⁷⁰ (Compare how Hypers used the Esther analogy, which is not the way in which other Calvinists would employ it in this context.)

As we shall see shortly, all of this is intricately tied in with the controversy surrounding the free offer. Offers are presumptuous and Arminian. Better, say the Hyper-Calvinists, to sit and wait rather than to accept a free offer. One must wait for a personal, not a general, invitation. He must wait and agonize until faith and assurance spring up. Then, and only then, does one have a warrant to approach the throne.

But surely there is some inconsistency here. Have not some Hyper-Calvinists themselves professed that they have assurance? Are they themselves guilty of the presumption they warn against? What are we to make of them? Firstly, those who actually profess such assurance are fairly scarce within Hyper-Calvinist ranks, though it would be fair to say that their ministers and especially the writers generally profess assurance. The average man in the pew either lacks assurance or has only a small amount of it mixed with an enormous amount of doubt and fear of presumption. The leaders can exhort the people to follow their examples only just so far - after all, they do not know which ones are elect and they must not be misconstrued as teaching a free offer of Duty-Faith. In reply to this coolness, the average adherent often looks up to these leaders in awe. But rather than emulating their example they 'humbly' say that "These men are far more holy than I am. It would be presumption of me to follow their example".

What critics find particularly distressing is that this state of affairs is not only fostered by the theology of Hyper-Calvinism, but also that the leaders themselves encourage it by rejecting free offers all in the name of defending Calvinistic and Biblical spirituality.

69. Note that this was written during Gill's ministry. Almost all Hypers have considered the Wesleys to have been dangerous Arminians, presumption being among their many faults. Others in the Evangelical Awakening came under this anathema, as well as the leaders in the Missionary Movement (especially Fuller).

70. Gill's Commentary gives little light here, as he explains it almost entirely in terms of prayer. Even so, that has relevance concerning faith and submission to divine sovereignty, as noted previously.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FREE OFFER QUESTION

A. THE HISTORICAL SETTING

More than any other doctrine, it is the one of the rejection of free offers and 'Duty-Faith' that is mentioned in defining or describing Hyper-Calvinism.¹ Before we look at the details of the controversy it is fitting that we first look at the historical context.

The questions underlying the offer question were discussed at length throughout the Puritan era but it was not until the Neonomian Controversy that the word 'offer' was disputed. The two persons then most involved in the Hyper-Calvinist reaction were the first two Hyper-Calvinists themselves: Joseph Hussey and Richard Davis. There does not appear to be any debate over the word from either the Neonomians (Baxter, Williams et al) or the Anti-Neonomians (Chauncey, Howe et al) or the mediators (e.g. Witsius).² Now Davis had been active in evangelism of the 'offer' variety for most of his ministry.³ Yet towards

1. E.g., Clipsham, 'Fuller and Fullerism', p.101; Ward, 'The Baptists and the Transformation of the Church', p.167; I. Murray, The Forgotten Spurgeon, p.49; Bush and Nettles, Baptists and the Bible, p.101; Good, Are Baptists Calvinists?, p.77; Oliver, 'Survey', p.8; Toon, HC, p.145; Young, 'Historic Calvinism and Neo-Calvinism', p.64; Rice, Hell, p.6; Hindson, Introduction to Puritan Theology, p.24; and many others. Pink often gave this description (e.g., Election and Justification, p.181; Reconciliation, p.139; Perseverance, p.66). Later we will discuss the problem of how Pink wavers on this in his own theology. Engelsma parallels Pink in using the popular description of Hyper-Calvinism (e.g., pp.1, 10-11, 71, 136), but he contradicts himself in exonerating the Hoeksema school from this description. Wilks said that 'Modern Antinomians' (i.e., Hyper-Calvinists) do not believe in offers and 'conditional salvation', while 'Modern Calvinists' (High and Low Calvinists) accept both. See Wilks, pp.25-30, 34. Similarly Palmer: "By modern Calvinists, I therefore mean - such as hold forth general invitations and offered mercy, without laying before their hearers those points on which Calvin chiefly insisted" (Free Enquiry, p.10). As we shall see throughout this Chapter, the 'free offer' is inextricably linked to 'Duty-Faith'. Some descriptions of Hyperism centre more on the one than on the other.

2. See Chauncey's discussion in Neonomianism, Part II, pp.199-218; Part III, pp.82-96. One could say that Chauncey opened the door and Davis and Hussey passed through it.

3. Toon, PC, p.89; Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelicalism in England, p.13; Nuttall, 'Northamptonshire', p.113; Glass, The Early History of the Independent Church at Rothwell.

the end of his ministry he rejected the 'free offer' approach. When Gill later edited an edition of Davis's hymns he commented in the preface that

... whereas the phrase of offering Christ and Grace, is sometimes used in these Hymns, which may be offensive to some persons; and which the worthy Author was led to the use of, partly thro' custom, it not having been at the writing of them objected to, and partly thro' his affectionate concern and zeal for gaining upon souls, and encouraging them to come to Christ; I can affirm upon good and sufficient testimony, that Mr. Davis, before his death, changed his mind in this matter, and disused the phrase, as being improper, and as being too bold and free, for a minister of Christ to make use of.⁴

Gill does not name his sources. But since he was from the same part of England (Northamptonshire) as was Davis, and was reared in the early days of the controversy and doubtless had personal contact with some of Davis's associates, his comment is probably true. It has the ring of truth to it. Davis's own written views on the subject were sketchy and confused.⁵ But it was Hussey, not Davis, who started the offer controversy.⁶

Like Davis, Joseph Hussey was also involved in evangelism. During this time he wrote The Gospel Feast Opened, a work which clearly advocated the 'free offer' position (it even recommended Alleine's Alarm to the Unconverted).⁷ At some point Hussey abruptly rejected 'offers'. He even denied that he had ever been successful in his 'free offer' evangelism; success came, he felt, when he began "preaching grace"

4. Gill, Preface to Davis, Hymns, p.V. Styles quotes these words in Guide, p.61. Cf. Toon, HC, p.93; 'A Most Horrid and Dismal Plague', p.39.

5. E.g., Davis, Truth, p.21. See Section C below. Toon denies that Davis ever rejected the free offer (PC, p.95). Nuttall feels that Davis wavered on the question in the latter part of his life ('Northamptonshire', pp.113-114). J.C. Ryland, Jr. said of Davis and the Modern Question: "But I can find no evidence that he took the negative side on the question" (The Work of Faith, p.6).

6. So, for example, Nuttall, 'Calvinism in Free Church History', BQ, vol.22, p.422; Kirkby, p.50; Harrison, p.21; Abraham Taylor, Address to Students, p.14; J.C. Ryland, Jr., The Work of Faith, p.207; H. Foster, in Pratt, The Thought of Evangelical Leaders, p.224; Toon, HC, p.83. Oliver correctly notes that while there were tendencies in the direction of Hyper-Calvinism in the seventeenth century, it did not actually take shape until Hussey ('Survey', pp.8-9). Fuller thought that Hussey laid the foundation for the non-offer position but still held to the 'Duty-Faith' view (Works, p.194), but we find this most difficult to accept.

7. The Gospel Feast, Epistle to the Reader, p.vii.

rather than "offering grace".⁸ At this point he wrote God's Operations of Grace But No Offers of Grace (1707).

It must be remembered that Hussey wrote Operations at the end of the Neonomian Controversy. In it he blames the Neonomians for the idea of 'offer' evangelism,⁹ as he had done briefly in his Glory of Christ (1706). For example, he associates the 'offer' position with libertinism.¹⁰ This is a curious accusation indeed, because most of the Anti-Neonomians charged Neonomians with legalism and not libertinism. On the other hand, he accepted the charge that he himself was 'Antinomian' and that the non-offer position was 'Antinomian'.¹¹ 'Antinomian' here means 'Crispian' (see Chapter X). And of course Hussey felt that he was firmly within orthodox Reformed tradition. He even claimed support from the Synod of Dort.¹²

Hussey and Davis were both Independents. As yet no Baptist accepted their views. After the Neonomian Controversy the Independents found themselves even further from the Presbyterians than before, since the latter were more susceptible to Neonomianism. Soon the non-offer theology would be introduced to Baptists, who would in turn become caretakers of it as the Independents divided into Neonomianism or other 'offer' positions (like Moderate Calvinism). The first Baptist of note to accept the non-offer view was John Skepp, a personal friend of Hussey.¹³

In the 1720's the offer question was discussed in the Marrow Controversy in Presbyterian churches in Scotland. The debate there took on a few new aspects. For instance, the Marrowmen were charged with Antinomianism and with teaching a free offer that was too free. Their opponents taught a stronger 'Preparationist' position, which in many respects paralleled the non-offer position. In England the non-offer proponents were charged with Antinomianism, while in Scotland it was the free offer proponents who were charged with Antinomianism.¹⁴

8. Operations, pp.61-62, 411.

9. Operations, p.26. Cf. Glory, p.545. Moreover, 'offers' are Arminian (Operations, pp.257-258). See Section D below.

10. Glory, pp.435, 647.

11. Ibid. Cf. also pp.245, 293, 303, 385.

12. Glory, pp.648-649. Hoeksema has also made this claim for himself.

13. Seymour (p.55) is correct here.

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As the debate continued in England the controversy began to be known as the 'Modern Question', a term popularised by Alverey Jackson's The Question Answered (1752). The question itself has been variously defined but two elements are particularly essential to it. Some define it in terms of the giving of the offer and others in terms of the reception of the offer (i.e. the duty to believe). Jackson put the question in this form: "Whether this same saving faith in Christ, is not also a duty, required by the moral law of God, of all those who live under the gospel revelation, and have the word of faith preached unto them?"¹⁵ Jackson answered in the affirmative. So did Joseph Stennet, a personal friend of Gill.¹⁶ Abraham Taylor was involved in the debate on Jackson's side in The Modern Question Examined. Taylor was also a friend of Gill but the two separated as a result of the debate and related doctrines. Taylor denounced Hussey¹⁷ and Gill denounced Taylor.

It was John Brine, however, and not John Gill, who wrote most in defence of the non-offer view at this time. He praised Hussey¹⁸ and answered Taylor at length. This is not to say that Gill did not admire Hussey (though he rarely mentions him and never in the context of the debate) or that he did not join the debate. Throughout his many writings we find his comments on the subject. Yet it was Brine who gathered the arguments together and took a higher position than that of Gill. There is a most interesting passage in Fuller's Works on this point which should be quoted:

Mr. Brine is the only writer of eminence who has expressly

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14. See especially Lachman's thesis; I. Murray, 'The Free Offer and the Marrow'; and John MacLeod, Scottish Theology.

15. The Question Answered, p.7. One early negative reply came from John Johnson, The Faith of God's Elect. Burn referred to the question later and the title explains the issue: The Great Religious Question: How is Faith a Duty and a Gift of Grace?, Being an Examination of John Foreman's 'Remarks on Duty Faith'. Cf. Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelicalism in England, p.13; Dix, p.3; Stonehouse, Fullerism Defended, p.3; Kirkby, pp.50-51; Wayman, Further Enquiry, p.1.

16. Dix, p.3.

17. Taylor, Address, p.14.

18. Brine, Remarks, pp.16-19.

defended the sentiment. Dr. Gill took no active part in the controversy. It is allowed that the negative side of the question was his avowed sentiment, and this appears to be implied in the general tenor of his writings. At the same time, it cannot be denied that, when engaged in other controversies, he frequently argued in a manner favourable to our side; and his writings contain various concessions on this subject which, if any one else had made them, would not be much to the satisfaction of our opposing brethren. However they may be inclined to represent us as verging towards Arminianism, it is certain that Dr. Gill, in his answer to Dr. Whitby,.. frequently makes use of our arguments; nor could he easily have gone through that work without them.¹⁹

This reminds us of the Supralapsarian debate. If Fuller is correct, then Gill was balancing between the two positions while tending towards the non-offer view, even as Gill was Supralapsarian while not entirely ruling out Sublapsarianism. However, we question Fuller's accuracy. Gill mentioned the offer debate in the Cause against Whitby but always rejected the 'offer arguments'. Yet Fuller was aware that the non-offer position indeed had much in common with High Calvinism.

Though Brine said more than Gill about the Modern Question, Gill wrote more than Brine about the Evangelical Awakening. Even so, he said relatively little and far less than one would have expected. Surely Gill knew about the phenomena of the Awakening, for he pastored and lived only a few miles from sites of some of the Awakening's greatest open-air meetings. And we have no doubt that many Particular Baptists consulted the renowned Dr. Gill for his opinion. It is inconceivable that Gill was indifferent about it. We find no evidence that any Particular Baptist took part in the Awakening; it was mainly an Anglican affair²⁰ and Baptists viewed it with suspicion.²¹ According to Manley, Rippon felt that Gill's Calvinism grew higher as a result of his opposition to the Evangelical Awakening in 1739-40, when the Modern Question was most debated.²² To Gill, the Awakening evangelists were either Arminian, semi-Arminian or Neonomian.²³ He therefore considered them to

19. Fuller, Works, p.194. Cf. p.158. On Gill and the offer question, see Robison, 'Legacy', pp.117-120; Hemington, Remarks, pp.9-14, 22-25.

20. The Great Awakening in America was contemporary with and related to the British Evangelical Awakening but occurred mainly within Congregational (Independent) and Presbyterian churches. Some General Baptists were involved in both Awakenings.

21. Underwood, p.149; D.E. Edwards, pp.161-164.

22. Manley, John Rippon, p.348.

be dangerous enemies of the truth.

It was John Wesley in particular whom Gill chose to oppose.²⁴ Gill strongly disagreed with Wesley's Anglicanism and paedobaptism, but Gill later befriended A.M. Toplady, who was also an Anglican paedobaptist. Toplady, however, was also a very high Calvinist and opposed Wesley.²⁵ It is granted by all that Wesley was an Arminian but we need to note that his was evangelical Arminianism (some say as per Arminius²⁶) rather than the Arian Arminianism of Whitby.²⁷

Wesley began the tract war with Gill with his Serious Thoughts on the Saints' Perseverance (1751), which Gill answered with The Doctrine of the Saints' Final Perseverance (1752). Wesley replied with Predestination Calmly Considered (1752), suggesting that Gill was not calmly considering the subject, and with A Full Answer to Dr. Gill's Pamphlet on Perseverance (1752).²⁸ Gill then wrote The Doctrine of Predestination (1752). Tracts gave way to sarcastic poetry: Wesley's An Answer to All Which the Reverend Doctor Gill Has Printed on the Final Perseverance of the Saints (1754) and Gill's Perseverance: A Poem in Reply to the Reverend Mister Wesley's Poetical Performance (1755).

It has been reported that Wesley once remarked to Toplady that Gill "is a positive man, and fights for his own opinions through thick and

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23. Cf. Underwood, pp.149, 160; Ivimey, vol.III, p.280; Seymour, p.312. Many non-Hyper-Calvinists (e.g., McNeill, p.371) feel that Wesley was the only Arminian leader of the Awakening, while Methodists often claim that Whitefield was actually one of the few Calvinist leaders. Our impression is that half of the leadership were Calvinist and half were Arminian, generally speaking.

24. On the Gill-Wesley controversy, see Seymour, pp.143-153; Coppedge, pp.25-27, 133; Rippon, pp.xxxiii-xxxiv.

25. On the Wesley-Toplady controversy, see Coppedge, pp.187-207. Styles described a hypothetical meeting between Wesley and Toplady in heaven. This does not mean that Styles felt that Wesley was indeed going to be in heaven; it is meant to discredit him (Guide, p.106. Cf. p.118).

26. E.g., Seymour, p.143. There are probably as many varieties of Arminianism as there are of Calvinism. See Chapter XII.

27. Wesley published parts of Whitby's Discourse in The Arminian Magazine (Coppedge, p.25) but clearly opposed all Arianism, Socinianism and Deism.

28. Gill refers to "this miserable piece" and says "any other man but Mr. Wesley would, upon reflection, be covered with shame and confusion" when confronted with Gill's Doctrine of the Saints' Perseverance (S & T, vol.III, p.101). Wesley's Predestination Calmly Considered must not be confused with the later (1821) work of the same title by William Tucker.

thin".²⁹ This may be but a backhanded compliment. What did Gill think of Wesley? In one place he accused him of inconsistency and unethical conduct for rejecting Calvinistic predestination while remaining in the Church of England and subscribing to the (Calvinistic) Thirty-Nine Articles.³⁰ It is difficult to determine whether Gill considered Wesley to be a true Christian, howbeit in serious error, or a heretic propagating heresy which contradicts the very essentials of Christianity. Gadsby evidently did not consider Wesley to be a true Christian, for he called him the worst "barefaced liar" who ever lived and the Pope of Arminianism.³¹ Yet Gadsby refrained from a final condemnation: "All I can say is, that if he died in the state he was in when he made the confession ... he is not in heaven".³²

It is our opinion that Gill and most Hyper-Calvinists shared Gadsby's view. This is based not only upon what Gill actually says about Wesley but on what he says about Arminianism in general. Throughout his writings Gill classes Arminianism with Arianism, Socinianism, Deism and Romanism - all damnable heresies. It is not merely a discussion about secondary doctrines. In some places Gill says that one should grant liberty to those with whom one disagrees on secondary doctrines if there is agreement on the fundamental tenets. Elsewhere, however, he states that there should be contention over "not only the fundamentals, but (also) the lesser matters of faith".³³ He disputed with Whitby as a heretic. Whitby was first an arch-Arminian and later an Arian, and for Gill the one leads to the other and both are damnable. We have no doubt that Gill classed Wesley with Whitby, especially after Wesley republished Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points, the first edition of which Gill refuted with his Cause.

The relevance of all this to the offer question and the Evangelical

29. Quoted in Light, Bunhill Fields, vol.I, pp.125-126.

30. S & T, vol.III, pp.109-110. Cf. p.120. Whitefield had earlier made the same charge against Wesley, and it was a major topic with Toplady.

31. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.183. Cf. p.55. Wilks called Wesley 'a cheat' (p.392). John Gadsby give a brief and scathing biography of Wesley in Hymn-Writers, pp.137-140. It abounds in rumours mainly of a scurrilous nature. Though he commends Wesley's arduous labours and energies Gadsby comes short of actually saying that Wesley was a real Christian. Engelsma speaks of Wesley as "the notorious, admitted Arminian" (p.12).

32. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.56.

33. Comm on Jude 3.

Awakening should be obvious: Gill considered 'free offer' Calvinism to be precariously close to being false Calvinism, or Arminianism in disguise. To accept the free offer position, therefore, would jeopardise his whole doctrinal foundation.

One wonders what Gill thought about George Whitefield. Like Wesley, he was an Anglican, a paedobaptist and a proponent of the free offer, but he was also a Calvinist. It is a significant and unexpected discovery of our research to learn that Gill never once mentions Whitefield in any of his writings. Later Hyper-Calvinists (even Gadsby) have looked upon Whitefield as a Christian, often in admiration. Even Toplady eulogized him. Yet mid-eighteenth century Particular Baptists were suspicious of Whitefield for his association with Wesley. Some, it is reported, complained of Whitefield's 'Arminian dialect' (accent).³⁴

One must remember that Whitefield himself had a controversy with Wesley and broke with him temporarily over the question of election. Though he first said that "no one can say that I ever mentioned it in public discourses, whatever my private sentiments may be", he later stated to Wesley, "I must preach the Gospel of Christ, and that I cannot now do, without speaking of election".³⁵ Hence he seems to have shifted somewhat, eventually holding that election is indeed a very important doctrine and one over which disputes must take place. (Even so, he reunited with Wesley, though with lesser unity than before.) We can see, then, why Gill opposed Whitefield but not why he should oppose him

34. Cf. Ivimey, vol.III, p.280; Harrison, p.27; Underwood, p.160; Dallimore, vol.I, p.576; Seymour, p.312. Praises of Whitefield came from Philpot, Meditations, vol.III, p.60; Reviews, vol.I, pp.55-63, 209-222; John Gadsby, Hymn-Writers, pp.140-151; Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.52-54; Beeman, Remains, vol.I, p.249; Pink, Godhead, p.125; Windridge, p.220; Hassell, History, pp.536-537, 549-551; Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.303. Philpot even called him "the prince of preachers" (Reviews, vol.I, p.222). Cf. Geoffrey Williams, Appendix to Warburton's Mercies, p.245. Several Hypers greatly differentiated the theologies and persons of Wesley and Whitefield (e.g., Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.152; Huntington, Works, vol.X, p.418). Though many later Hypers have praised Whitefield, we have yet to find a single commendation from one who lived contemporary with him. Rather, all indications are that his contemporaries opposed him. Some critics feel that this is a classic example of Pharisees building monuments to the very prophets whom their fathers stoned (Matt. 23:29-36). Whitefield, however, seems to be an exception in this inconsistency. Praises for Fuller, Carey or Spurgeon (much less Wesley) have been exceedingly rare by later Hyper-Calvinists. Hypers have consistently opposed them.

35. Whitefield, Letters, pp.189, 509. Cf. Crew, p.129; D.E. Edwards, p.117. See also Whitefield, Works, vol.IV, pp.53ff. Whitefield may be thinking of the Hyper-Calvinists when he confesses, "Though I hold particular election, yet I offer Jesus freely to every individual soul" (Works, vol.I, p.331).

very strongly. That he did, in fact, oppose him is not discernible from his own writings but from the anonymous tract which tried to persuade Gill not to oppose Whitefield or the other Awakening evangelists.³⁶ The author puts forth two reasons in defence of them: their basic unity with the Particular Baptists in the cause of Christ and their unity in opposing Popery. Gill ignored the tract.

It has sometimes been noted that while Gill was shut up in his study working on his Commentary, Whitefield was actively involved in evangelism only a few miles away at such places as Newington Common, Blackheath and Kennington Common.³⁷ Was Gill envious of Whitefield's success? We cannot say. But one must think twice about this possibility when reading Gill's own words on the subject, written at the very height of the Awakening:

there are many adversaries, as there always are where the Gospel is preached, and especially with success, when sinners are converted, and saints are edified and comforted.³⁸

Whitefield had no exceptional theological skill,³⁹ but what about Jonathan Edwards? Edwards was one of the most able and orthodox Calvinist minds since Calvin and was deeply involved in evangelism in America. We are utterly amazed that Gill never mentions him either. Unlike Whitefield, Edwards co-operated very little with Arminians; he even refuted Whitby in his treatise on original sin. He was well known on two continents. And it is inconceivable that Gill never heard of him. For example, Gill was aware of ecclesiastical news from the American colonies, such as the baptismal controversies and witch hunts.⁴⁰ He contributed copies of his works to the Baptist training college at Brown University in Rhode Island.⁴¹ But in only one place does he even hint

36. B.A., Unity Among Christian Ministers and People. Recommended in a Letter to Mr. John Gill.

37. E.g., Whitley, Calvinism and Evangelicalism in England, p.28; Seymour, p.312.

38. Comm on I Cor. 16:9.

39. Though Whitefield studied divinity at Oxford, early in his ministry he confessed, "Alas, I never read any thing that Calvin wrote" (Letters, p.205). But he did do a fair amount of theological reading, including Gill (probably the Song). Cf. Dallimore, vol.I, pp.89, 394-410; vol.II, pp.492-493, 527-528; Tyerman, Whitefield, vol.I, pp.274-275; vol.II, pp.582-283; and Whitefield's own Works, vol.III, pp.497-498; vol.IV, pp.305-308.

40. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.411-412, 462.

41. R.A. Guild, History of Brown University, pp.66, 158, 336.

at accepting the Great Awakening: "Many being converted under the ministry of the word in New England..."⁴² This could, however, be a reference to Baptist church-planting or the work of the Puritans in the previous century; Gill gives no names or dates or specific places.

Edwards was active in evangelism,⁴³ but like Gill he was primarily a pastor and theologian. He was also something of a philosopher. Perhaps Gill did not like his philosophical approach. Perhaps Gill associated Edwards with Whitefield and thereby with Wesley and Arminianism. That would have been sufficient for Gill. That Gill misunderstood Edwards's writings or was not familiar with them is difficult to accept. That Gill agreed with him but remained silent is an option we find incredible.

Curiously, it was mainly through Edwards and not Whitefield that evangelical Calvinism was introduced to Particular Baptists.⁴⁴ Edwards was the one most responsible for Whitefield's growing Calvinism. It is possible that he influenced Whitefield to part from Wesley. Note that Edwards, Whitefield and Gill were of the same generation. When they died their influence continued but the evangelical Calvinism of the former two gained precedence over the latter. While he was still alive Gill maintained Hyper-Calvinism in Particular Baptist circles but it was not long after his death that the theological current changed. When Baptists began to consider the offer question, it was not primarily Whitefield to whom they looked for theological guidance. It was Edwards.

The influence of Edwards is seen in the change at the Bristol Academy, which was probably ~~was~~ the most influential Baptist theological training college in the world. During his day Gill supported the Academy.⁴⁵ His successor, John Rippon, also supported it. Soon Rippon began to question the non-offer position, eventually recognizing

42. S & T¹, vol.II, p.259. Isaac Backus recorded that Gill's statement was in reply to a query made by Baptists in Boston in 1749 (History, vol.II, pp.140-152).

43. See especially Long's thesis, Jonathan Edwards - Theory and Practice of Evangelism.

44. So Robison, pp.162-170 and others. Cf. L.G. Champion, 'The Theology of John Ryland: Its Sources and Influences', BQ, vol.28, no.1, pp.18-19; Wheeler, The Theological Justification of the Great Missionary Awakening, especially pp.89-90. As with Whitefield, later Hyper-Calvinists praised Edwards (e.g., Philpot, Reviews, vol.I, pp.247-269; Hassell, History, pp.548-549).

45. Rippon, p.lv.

Whitefield, Edwards, Wesley, the Moravians and even evangelical Anglican bishops and Quakers. He even recommended the distribution of Alleine's Alarm to the Unconverted and Baxter's Call to the Unconverted.⁴⁷ This only convinced his contemporary Hyper-Calvinists that the free offer was Neonomian.

At the same time as Rippon, Andrew Fuller also changed to the free offer position. He had been raised under strong non-offer Hyper-Calvinism but broke loose through reading Abraham Taylor and Jonathan Edwards.⁴⁸ Discontent among Particular Baptists was increasing and Fuller's The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation (1785) sounded the trumpet call to evangelism. It was undoubtedly the most important book in freeing Particular Baptists from the grip of Hyper-Calvinism.

Fuller in turn influenced two other leaders. John Ryland, Jr. claimed to accept the free offer position through reading Fuller's book.⁴⁹ This Ryland was associated with the Bristol Academy and became the third leader of the evangelical Baptist movement. The fourth leader was William Carey. Carey was influenced mostly by Fuller and the two of them worked closely for some time. Carey used to say that he would go down into the mine if Fuller would hold the rope. These four Baptists helped found the Baptist Missionary Society and often shared pulpits with one another.⁵⁰ Three remained in Britain to stir up missionary interest while the fourth (Carey) actually went to the mission field. Thus they went further than even the two Awakenings, which were mostly involved in home missions. Carey, however, had a direct precursor in David Brainerd, Jonathan Edwards's son-in-law missionary to the American Indians. There is no doubt that Edwards's biography of Brainerd greatly influenced the four leaders.

Two interesting observations can be made at this point. First, it was ironic that the very pulpit of John Gill, which was the headquarters for

47. Manley, John Rippon, p.394.

48. So Nuttall, 'Northamptonshire', p.122; Toon, HC, pp.151-152. Reed is clearly incorrect in saying that "Fuller held that grace was not offered indiscriminately to all men, but only to the elect" (Reed, Atonement, p.115). This could be correct only when referring to the early Fuller. Wheeler says that Fuller was influenced by the Marrow of Modern Divinity (op. cit., pp.89, 181).

49. Nuttall, 'Northamptonshire', pp.121-122; Champion, op. cit., pp.17-29.

50. Manley, John Rippon, p.115; Clipsham, 'Fuller and Fullerism', p.100.

the non-offer position for a whole generation, soon became the pulpit of John Rippon and thereby became one of the most important pulpits for the free offer movement. Secondly, it was a strange twist of Providence that Carey would work so closely with John Ryland, Jr. when just a few years earlier Carey had his famous confrontation with John Ryland, Sr. At a certain ministerial meeting Carey had suggested discussion over whether the Particular Baptist ministers and churches should become involved in evangelism and missions. The well-known reply of the senior Ryland has been variously recorded and paraphrased but ran something like this: "Sit down, young man, sit down. You are an enthusiast. When the Lord gets ready to convert the heathen, he will do it without your help or mine. He will do it in his own good time".⁵¹ It should be remembered that in those days 'enthusiast' was a derogatory term and referred to mystics and fanatics like the Quakers and Familists. Puritan Federalists labelled the Antinomians as enthusiasts. The irony is obvious. Hyper-Calvinists, who originally sided with Antinomians, were now opposing the moderate Calvinists with the very same accusation of enthusiasm. Which of them were, in fact, the real enthusiasts remains to be seen.⁵²

These then are the main persons involved in the debate up till the beginning of the nineteenth century. A few lesser names can be mentioned in passing. Before the Evangelical Awakening Isaac Watts and

51. We have not been able to locate the original source of this quote, though it is in most of the biographies of Carey and Fuller. See also Underwood, p.142; Engelsma, p.18; Good, p.77; Colquitt, p.130. Some sources add a continuation of Ryland's rebuke to the effect that foreign missions are not feasible because of the language barrier; thus, we cannot expect worldwide revival without a second Pentecost. It is not certain whether he meant that we should wait until this second Pentecost arrived before resuming missions, or that such an event will never occur. John Ryland, Jr., however, doubted whether the "ill-natured anecdote respecting my father and young Carey" was actually true. "I never heard of it till I saw it in print, and I cannot give credit to it at all. No man prayed and preached about the latter-day glory more than my father; nor did I ever hear such sentiments proceed from his lips as are there ascribed to him" (The Work of Faith, p.175). The junior Ryland may only be referring to the alleged addition about no worldwide missions because of the cessation of miraculous gifts, for he does not specifically mention the "Sit down, young man" rebuke. But the famous rebuke has been the more controversial statement and it is to this that Ryland, Jr. is probably alluding. On the context of the rebuke, see F.D. Walker, William Carey, p.63. Shortly after the incident, Carey wrote the mandate for the missionary movement, An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen (1792). In it he implies a rebuke of his own to the senior Ryland: "If God intends the salvation of the heathen, he will some way or other bring them to the gospel, or the gospel to them" (p.8).

52. For further on this, see Chapters X and XII.

Phillip Doddridge, the two most influential Independent Calvinists in the first half of the eighteenth century, were pro-offer. Watts had been dismissed by Hyper-Calvinists for what was considered Sabellianism.⁵³ Doddridge was opposed because of his efforts in, and views on, evangelism⁵⁴ and replied with sermons and tracts defending the offer position.⁵⁵ Both men befriended and encouraged Whitefield in his ministry,⁵⁶ but they both died in the early days of the Evangelical Awakening and the Modern Question debate. But their influence was felt all the same.

James Hervey also associated with both Independents and Particular Baptists. He was one of the original members of the Holy Club at Oxford with Wesley and Whitefield and had some minor involvement in the Awakening. Gill knew and admired Hervey but we do not know how the relationship fared. He may have been one Awakening supporter whom Gill did not strongly oppose, but we cannot say.

Colligan⁵⁷ suggests that Gill was a friend of the Countess of Huntingdon, who supported Wesley and especially Whitefield. But he gives no evidence supporting this and we question the claim, having found no evidence in Gill or anyone else. But he is correct to point out that Toplady, a friend of Gill, was a friend of the Countess,⁵⁸ and also a friend of Whitefield.⁵⁹ Toplady may have opposed Wesley at Gill's instigation.⁶⁰ Toplady, however, was young and Gill was old during

53. See Chapters II and V. Philpot sums up the Hyper-Calvinist estimation: "Watts and Doddridge were the chief lights in the Dissenting Churches; and a mere glance at their writings will show how deficient both were in clear, distinct views of gospel truth" (Reviews, vol.I, p.57).

54. Doddridge, Correspondance, vol.4, p.166.

55. E.g., Christ's Invitation to Thirsty Souls and The Evil and Danger of Neglecting Souls.

56. Cf. R.T. Jones, pp.146-168. It should be pointed out that Watts was slower to accept the revival than was Doddridge. It might even be contended that he never really supported it, for it was only on his deathbed that he fully commended Whitefield.

57. Colligan, pp.124-127.

58. Colligan, pp.124-127. See Chapter I above. The relationship between Gill and Toplady must have been unusual in the light of Gill's staunch Dissenting views and Toplady's defence of the Established Church. Unfortunately, we have only a few pieces of information to go by. Most Hyper-Calvinists have been Baptists, the next largest group being Independents. Neither group had cordial relationships with Anglicans (witness Philpot and Tiptaft's secession), but a few individuals did (such as Wilks and Hawker).

59. In a eulogy on Whitefield's death Toplady called him "the Apostle of the English Empire" and "the prince of preachers" (Works, pp.135-138).

60. On the Wesley-Toplady controversy, see Coppedge, pp.187-207.

their brief friendship and we question how close they actually were. Toplady was a very High Calvinist and yet not entirely adverse to the Awakening, but dying early and being an Anglican he did not greatly influence the Baptists, nor did he have any contact with the Missionary Movement.

The first non-offer men were Independents (Hussey and Davis) but few other independents took the lead in their trail. Particular Baptists, like Gill and Brine, became the main leaders. Likewise, after the deaths of Watts, Doddridge, Whitefield and Wesley, the decisive leadership of the free offer movement fell not to Independents but to moderate Particular Baptists (Rippon, Fuller, Ryland and Carey).⁶¹ Some think that these 'Moderate Calvinists', as they came to be known, either contradicted their own Particularist theology or used new and bold expressions to accomodate it to the free offer.⁶² Others feel that the main hindrance was Gill and Brine and that after they were dead the Baptists could return to the evangelical Calvinism of Keach and Knollys.⁶³ There is much truth in both but we would add that both the Evangelical Awakening and the Baptist Missionary Movement far surpassed the evangelistic efforts of the Puritans. One reason is that representatives of the latter two were more open to work with Arminians than the Puritans had been.

What about the Arminian Baptists all this time? Originally the majority of Baptists in Britain were Arminian. In the seventeenth century John Smyth and other Arminians were the leaders before Bunyan and Keach rallied the Particular Baptists. In the eighteenth century the Arminian Baptists often fell prey to Arianism or Deism - errors which the Particular Baptists rarely encountered in their ranks. They eventually came to be known as General Baptists. One might think that they would be the first to form a missionary society but in fact theirs was formed much later (1816) than that of the Particular Baptists (1792).⁶⁴

Fuller's influence in tempering the Particular Baptists can hardly be over-emphasized. His Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation caused

61. Cf. Robison, p.141; Clipsham, 'Fuller and Fullerism', p.100; R.T. Jones, p.171; Whitley, A History of British Baptists, p.231.

62. E.g., R.T. Jones, p.171; Manley, John Rippon, p.45.

63. E.g., Seymour, p.312.

64. Underwood, p.154.

considerable controversy and several books and tracts were written for and against it. Most of the works defending Fuller were pretty much alike,⁶⁵ but his critics varied considerably in their outlook. Dan Taylor was an Arminian and felt that Fuller did not go far enough.⁶⁶ Abraham Booth, himself a High Calvinist, wrote Glad Tidings to Perishing Sinners⁶⁷ for the same purpose as Fuller - to combat the non-offer position and encourage evangelism - but Booth's book criticized Fuller for going too far in his moderation, particularly concerning the scope of atonement. William Button⁶⁸ and John Martin⁶⁹ gave Hyper-Calvinist replies but the largest effort against Fuller came some years later by John Stevens in Help for the True Disciples of Immanuel.⁷⁰ William Huntington resisted Fuller but his controversy was mainly with the younger Ryland, against whom he wrote Excommunication and the Duty of All Men to Believe Weighed in the Balance.⁷¹

The Gospel Standard Baptists under William Gadsby's leadership were particularly vilifying against Fuller, the doctrine of the free offer, and the Missionary Movement. Gadsby's son recorded of him, "Mr. Gadsby always considered, and often stated publicly, that Andrew Fuller was the greatest enemy the church of God ever had, as his sentiments

65. A typical example would be Stonehouse, Fullerism Defended. 'Fullerism' became a term of abuse among Hyper-Calvinists. Often it implied that men were following a mere man rather than the Lord; sometimes it suggested another 'ism' or sect. Most of Fuller's defenders did not employ the term, but a few did. Similarly, those who agreed with Fuller were castigated, as 'Fuller-ites'. Those who agreed with Fuller came from many denominational backgrounds: Independent, Anglican, but mostly Baptist. Urwick feels that Gill's nephew came to support Fuller, which would be comparable to the younger Ryland breaking with the family tradition of Hyperism (Nonconformity in Herts, pp.222-223). A few Hyper-Calvinists (such as S.E. Pierce) were converted through the Evangelical Awakening or the Missionary Movement, only later to oppose the leaders of it. This parallels how each of the four leaders of the Missionary Movement were converted through Hyper-Calvinism, only later to do battle with the Hypers' leaders.

66. Observations on the Rev. Andrew Fuller's Reply to Philanthropos, and elsewhere.

67. Found in Works, vol.II, pp.3-232.

68. Button became the pastor of the branch which split off of Gill's church when Rippon came to reject Hyperism and support the Missionary Movement. His Remarks on Fuller owed much to Gill and Lewis Wayman's Further Enquiry.

69. Thoughts on the Duty of Man Relative to Faith in Jesus Christ; In Which Mr. Andrew Fuller's Leading Propositions on that Subject are Considered.

70. Stevens summed up Fuller's views in six propositions, found in vol.I, pp.xi-xiv. On his controversy with Fuller, see his Memoir, pp.11, 14-19.

71. Found in Works, vol.XI, pp.121-202. Huntington also fought with Ryland over the question of doctrinal Antinomianism. See Chapter X.

were so much cloaked with sheep's clothing".⁷² His views closely paralleled those in which the elder Ryland rebuked Carey,⁷³ and he had no sympathy for the Missionary Movement nor its tactics. "I hope no mortal living will ever see me uniting in the act of cheering, clapping of hands, thumping, and stamping at the missionary meetings, like characters at a theatre."⁷⁴ Philpot, of course, was active in the anti-offer movement, as were Hawker,⁷⁵ Parks,⁷⁶ Wells,⁷⁷ and many others.⁷⁸

The true disciples of Stevens opposed free offers and Duty-Faith in several important publications, such as John Foreman's Remarks on Duty Faith (with a Recommendatory Preface by James Wells). William Palmer produced A Free Enquiry Into the Subject of Offered Grace and General Invitations, and had a controversy with C.H. Spurgeon over the subject.⁷⁹ Spurgeon, of course, was a firm advocate of the free offer and was constantly active in evangelism.⁸⁰ Other Hypers were resisted by various and sundry persons, including more than a few High Calvinists (such as W.R. Aikman, a missionary to the Moslems).⁸¹

If Fuller, Carey, Whitefield and Spurgeon were opposed for their beliefs and practices in evangelism, even more so have other famous evangelists been the targets of Hyper arrows. D.L. Moody incurred

72. Memoir, p.33. Cf. pp.49, 82. Moreover, "he paid no more regard to offending Arminians and Fullerites than he would to Satan and his agents" (p.103).

73. Memoir, pp.114-115.

74. Works, vol.I, p.262.

75. See Thomas Smith, More Work for Dr. Hawker.

76. Parks approvingly quoted Hussey in rejecting offers (Five Points, pp.xvi, 18).

77. See especially the following two: The Moral Government of God: Wherein It is Shown that the General Exhortations of the Bible Are Not Founded in the Principle of Man Being in a Salvable State, But in the Principle of Moral and Individual Responsibility; and 'A Word of Instruction for Duty-Faith People', in Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, 1860, pp.9-16. Of 'professed Calvinists' who accept the notion of Duty-Faith, Wells warned that, "these approach nearest the truth, and are therefore the most cunning and dangerous of our foes" (Moral Government, p.7).

78. Some Hypers have claimed notable figures for their cause who have in no way rejected free offers of Duty-Faith. For instance, Styles even claims Catherine Booth of the Salvation Army - as if a group so evangelistic could possibly be anti-offer! See Manual, p.185.

79. See A Letter to Spurgeon.

80. Cf. Thornton, pp.70, 99-148, 228-291; Iain Murray, The Forgotten Spurgeon, pp.99-114.

81. Aikman wrote The Judgement of the Judges of Jehovah mainly against Philpot and the Gospel Standard Baptists. Curiously, he claimed that they did not follow Gill's views on offers and public preaching (pp.77-79, 86-87). He was taken to task by numerous writers, such as Charles Hemington, Remarks on Mr. W. Robertson Aikman's Book; and John Gadsby, Letter to Aikman.

Hyperist wrath,⁸² and many High Calvinists denounced him as well. But note that Spurgeon thought well of him, though with some reservations.⁸³ In more recent days Billy Graham has been opposed by Hyper-Calvinists⁸⁴ and many High Calvinists (e.g., Iain Murray and Erroll Hulse).⁸⁵

When we come to A.W. Pink we meet several difficulties. Some have asserted that Pink was not a Hyper-Calvinist because he believed in the free offer.⁸⁶ But the matter is more complicated than meets the eye at first glance, for though in many places he explicitly denies free offers, there are other places in which he defends them.⁸⁷ He rebukes certain Hyper-Calvinists for rejection of offers and Duty-Faith (Huntington, the Gospel Standard Baptists, etc.),⁸⁸ and he even commends Andrew Fuller.⁸⁹ And yet he quotes Rushton in rejecting offers⁹⁰ and there are many places in which he rejects free offers in no uncertain terms, as

82. E.g., John Gadsby, Letter to Aikman, pp.17, 19; J.K. Popham, Moody and Sankey's Errors Versus the Scriptures of Truth.

83. Williams, Reminiscences of Spurgeon, pp.56, 225.

84. E.g., Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.624.

85. Murray, The Invitation System; Hulse, Billy Graham - The Pastor's Dilemma. It may be noted that Hulse was converted under Graham's ministry.

86. E.g., Hulse, The Free Offer, p.11; Iain Murray, Pink (cf. pp.194-197); Belcher, Born to Write, pp.59-60. Belcher surely errs in asserting that "The truth of the matter was that there is no question in Pink's mind on these matters".

87. E.g., Perseverance, pp.9, 66; Atonement, p.170; Revelation, p.145. "It must not be concluded that we do not believe in an unfettered Gospel, or that we are opposed to the general offer of Christ to all who hear it" (Godhead, p.202).

88. Gleanings from the Scriptures, p.266; Murray, Pink, pp.138-139. "If on the one hand the minister must not be intimidated by Arminians, on the other he must not be brow-beaten by hyper-Calvinists, who object to the calling upon the unconverted to repent and believe the gospel" (Election and Justification, p.181). "I will tell you frankly that if a church does not evangelize, it will fossilize: and if I am not mistaken, that is what has happened in some of the Strict Baptist Churches in Australia" (quoted in Murray, Pink, p.52). Pink even classed Hypers together with Dispensationalists as "seducing emissaries who pose as men of superior enlightenment, with great spiritual zeal and love for souls, yet are engaged in stealthily propagating error and undermining the fundamentals of faith... They have vile designs... They are tricksters ... They are themselves deluded by the father of lies" (I John, p.179). The last quotation is particularly aimed at Dispensationalists, but the context clearly includes those who "set aside the duty of the sinner to repent and believe, by over-stressing his moral impotence" and who dismiss God's Law under the pretence of magnifying grace - a perfect description of the Gospel Standard Baptists.

89. Sovereignty, p.190. Here Pink acknowledges a debt to Fuller for the truth of the doctrine of the difference between natural and moral ability. Note that this is in Pink's most controversial book.

90. Atonement, pp.256-257.

we shall see throughout this chapter. It seems that Pink is inconsistent with himself here. It is not a matter of the early Pink versus the latter Pink, for acceptance and rejection of offers can be found in his earliest and last writings.⁹¹ Pink was, as we saw earlier, in agreement with other doctrines held by Hyper-Calvinists: Supralapsarianism, an imbalanced doctrine of sovereignty, repentance preceding faith, a doctrine approaching Pre-Existerianism, and so on. Of themselves these do not make one Hyperist. The distinctive element to be looked for is the rejection of free offers and/or Duty-Faith. Since we find that rejection in Pink to some extent, to that same extent Pink was a Hyper-Calvinist.

Pink was not the only one in that borderline position. James A. Haldane rejected the free offer in a few places, even though most of his writings tend more in the direction of High Calvinism.⁹² Dixon Burn wavered between the two schools as well,⁹³ and there are some peculiarities in H.A. Long that may put him in this class. Tryon was another such case. Though a member of the Gospel Standard Baptists, he rejected the Articles when they were written and put forth. But he also rejected offers and Duty-Faith, even if he seemed to accept universal invitations and commands to believe at times.

How is one to view these persons? We could say that they were not Hyper-Calvinists, but this would require a rejection of the definition of

91. Sovereignty is a good example of this. It was one of his first works and went through several printings and editions, the last not long before his death. The Banner of Truth abridgement omits some of the more controversial material, and one gets the impression that the editor (Iain Murray) felt that Pink altered his views with regard to such things as the free offer. We grant that Pink himself acknowledges that he matured in some areas, but Pink himself did not recant what he had written about rejection of offers.

92. Haldane is the only instance we could find of an explicit rejection of the free offer by a Scottish theologian. This is not to say that there were not others. Certainly the similarities with English Hyper-Calvinism have appeared in a number of persons and churches. It is important to be aware of the differences between the Scottish and English varieties of Calvinism on this and other points.

93. Burn strangely lists several Hyper-Calvinists whom he contends believed in Duty-Faith - such as Gill, Hussey and Huntington (The Great Religious Question, p.87). In this work Burn is writing against Foreman's Remarks on Duty-Faith, which would imply that he believed in what Foreman rejected. It is not as clear as that, for numerous Hypers have differed with each other on matters relating to offers, etc. But like Haldane, Burn gives the impression that the general tenor of his theology is more High than Hyper. That he names these three writers as believers in Duty-Faith suggests that he classed himself with them in their views. Either Burn was not familiar with their writings firsthand, or he misunderstood them, or stressed the slight differences which they had with the school of Stevens.

Hyperism in terms of offers. It would also ignore the instances in which they themselves reject offers. Or we could class them with other Hypers but emphasize that there are varieties of Hyperism and that these are in the lowest category. The latter is the only option that does justice to the facts and therefore it is the choice we select.

A similar state of affairs occurs with the school of Herman Hoeksema. To our knowledge, never in his ministry did he accept free offers. Indeed, he regularly rejected 'the well-meant offer', and the Protestant Reformed Church he founded has regularly been accused of Hyper-Calvinism because of its anti-offer stance.⁹⁴ As we have seen throughout this work, there are some differences between Hoeksema's form of Hyperism and the other forms. Certainly their traditions and nationalities differ. But they are nearly identical in the rejection of the offer and they employ most of the same arguments as the others. We shall see how the denial of being Hyperist by the Hoeksema school is based not so much on the slight differences they have with the other varieties as it is on an incorrect understanding of these other branches of Hyperism as well as a forced view of 'Reformed orthodoxy'.

This last point is particularly crucial at the present time. David Engelsma has recently felt the need to take up the cudgels in defence of Hoeksema and the non-offer position. He not only states that the rejection of the offer is not Hyper-Calvinism, but also asserts that acceptance of it is Arminian. Moreover, he holds that it is essential to the Reformed faith to reject offers.⁹⁵ It is irrelevant that so many of the early Calvinists spoke of 'offers', he says, for they meant something different by the word than is meant today.⁹⁶ As we see it, to

94. Engelsma, pp.1-2, 19, 21. Three works need to be consulted with reference to Hoeksema's views on this subject: Engelsma, Hyper-Calvinism and the Call of the Gospel; De Jong, The Well-Meant Gospel Offer; and Stebbins, Christ Freely Offered. The first is sympathetic with Hoeksema, the second is not, and the third is mixed. It is not enough, however, to rely on these three to discern the views of Hoeksema; one must make constant reference to the primary sources themselves in an objective fashion. The same refers to Hyper-Calvinism in general. That is why we have referred so prolifically to the original sources in the present work rather than relying on secondary treatments such as Toon's Hyper-Calvinism. Engelsma reveals an ignorance of the primary sources of historic Hyperism by referring mainly to Toon's book and an abridgement of Hussey's Operations. We will also refer to Homer Hoeksema's massive Voice, for it often discusses the question of offers from the Hoeksema perspective, even if it is not given over entirely to this issue.

95. Engelsma, pp.2, 42, 71-72, 81, 101.

96. Engelsma, p.81.

reach Engelsma's conclusions one must engage in a large amount of special pleading and ignorance of an even larger amount of data.

We will develop this further later on, but first we must investigate the doctrinal basis of those who have rejected free offers. That all of those - and many more - named in this section have rejected the offer doctrine is easily documented. The common denominator of these Hyper-Calvinists is that they reject free offers and/or Duty-Faith. It is fitting to see whether they also share a common doctrinal denominator which led them to this conclusion. Heretofore we have studied their views of selected doctrines. At this juncture we need to determine just what they considered to be the basic essence of the Gospel, or the objective statement of saving truths which must be accepted for a person to be saved. After all, what we are talking about is the offer of the Gospel. Or, to use Engelsma's words, "we are interested to ask concerning the doctrines of the offer: is it Reformed?"⁹⁷

97. Engelsma, p.81.

B. THE CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL

Fundamental to the whole debate over the free offer is the definition of the Gospel. Stebbins has commented, "The issue is not whether to preach the Gospel, but what Gospel to preach".¹ It is appropriate, then, to examine Gill's Gospel.

Gill was once rebuked for not clearly defining the Gospel.² We agree that his writings present conflicting statements on the subject, in spite of (perhaps because of) the huge amount of material available in them. Even Gill's Declaration of Faith and Practice³ is not fully definitive or exhaustive, though it is a helpful introduction. The important Federalist document, the Sum of Saving Knowledge, by its very title implies that the saving truths of Christianity can be summarized. It goes so far as to state:

The sum of the gospel, or covenant of grace and reconciliation, is this: 'If thou flee from deserved wrath to the true Redeemer Jesus Christ, (who is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him), thou shalt not perish, but have eternal life.'

In several places Gill lists doctrines which he considers essential to the Gospel and these lists come close to being definitions, even though they vary amongst themselves.⁵ Often he says that such and such a

1. Stebbins, p.6.

2. R. Hart, Dr. Gill's Reasons, p.14. Gadsby was later given a similar rebuke (Gawthorn, pp.9-10). In his useful and penetrating study James Wilson remarks, "It is hardly necessary to repeat that from neither of these, hypo-Calvinistic, Calvinistic, or hyper-Calvinistic theologians, do we obtain any clear or definite outlines of the Gospel, properly so-called. They merely furnish us with certain general statements connected with the Gospel, all in a sense more or less true, but throwing no light upon the special subject of our present inquiry" (The Gospel and the Atonement, p.9. Cf. p.7). Wilson particularly has in mind the Scottish Calvinists.

3. See appendix below. Other Confessions and Catechisms should be consulted as well.

4. Introduction to Practical Use of Saving Knowledge. For a more in-depth summary of the basic Gospel from the Federalist point of view, see Witsius, Economy, vol.I, pp.16-33. As for the Antinomians, see the Appendix to Eaton's Honeycombe.

5. The fullest summaries are: Comm on II Tim. 1:13, Gal. 1:23, Pro. 15:30, II Cor. 1:19, Acts 10:36, 20:20, Mark 16:15. Other summaries include: Huntington, Substance, pp.34-63; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.258-260; vol.II, p.68 (Gadsby's Catechism is of particular relevance here); Hawker, Works, vol.X, pp.569-729 (catechisms); Roe, pp.1-12, 65-66; Popham, Sermons, vol.III, pp.134-144; vol.IV, pp.188-198; Hoeksema, The Gospel; IK, vol.I, pp.278-294; Engelsma, pp.19, 61-63. Hoeksema felt that the Apostles' Creed, helpful as it is, does not include all fundamentals of the faith - such as substitutionary atonement, predestination, election, reprobation, ... Cont'd:

verse in the Bible is "the sum and substance of the Gospel"⁶ and, as we may expect, he particularly mentions Romans 8:29-30 as "a rich summary and glorious compendium and chain of Gospel truths".⁷ This is not to say, of course, that salvation is received merely by believing "bare axioms or propositions".⁸ Even so, special faith necessarily gives assent to certain truths.

To Gill the systematic theologian the Gospel is "a system of holy doctrines",⁹ "a form ... a summary and compendium of truths",¹⁰ "a short form or breviary ... a glorious form of sound words ... a set of Gospel truths ... a rule and pattern, as for hearers to judge by, so for ministers to preach according to".¹¹ As we noted in Chapter II, Gill adhered to the idea of the 'analogy of faith',¹² which sums up the Gospel and is the rule for faith and hermeneutics.

The Puritans had wrestled with the problem of whether the Gospel can be summed up in a single statement or groups of statements and, if so, what the basic tenets would be. Thomas Manton, for example, said:

I shall not take upon me to determine what articles are

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sin, grace, preservation, etc. (IK, vol.I, p.336).

6. E.g., Comm on II Cor. 5:19, Rom. 10:9-10.

7. Body, Introduction, p.xxvi; Comm on II Tim. 1:13. It was popular with the Puritans to refer to Rom. 8:29-30 as a chain. This was especially popularised in Perkins' Golden Chain. Others who have referred to Romans 8 as the Golden Chain include: Kershaw, Grace Alone, p.146; Autobiography, pp.44, 171; Philpot Meditations, vol.III, pp.61, 105; Vinall, Sermons, p.177; Parks, Five Points, pp.27, 60; Hussey, Gospel-Feast, p.105; Glory, p.379; Engelsma, p.171. Hoeksema called it "the unbreakable chain of salvation" (Dogmatics, pp.471-472, 476). Philpot referred to Rom. 5:3-5 as "the Golden Chain of Tribulation and Love" (Sermons, vol.X, p.126). Gill also spoke of the first two chapters of Ephesians as a "compendium of the mystery of the Gospel, in its several parts" (Comm on Eph. 1:13). Pink thought that the first half of Ephesians 1 was "probably the profoundest and most comprehensive doctrinal summary to be found in Holy Writ" (Paul, p.97). Elsewhere Pink states that Gal. 3:13 is "the glorious Gospel summed up in a brief sentence" (Godhead, p.118).

8. Body, pp.731-732, 735.

9. Comm on Isa. 52:10.

10. Comm on Rom. 6:17.

11. Comm on II Tim. 1:13. Pink speaks for all concerned: "the fundamental articles of faith ... the first principles of the oracles of God ... or basic truths of Scripture ... are absolutely necessary unto salvation" (quoted in I. Murray, Life of Pink, p.240).

12. Comm on II Tim. 1:13; Isa. 40:6; Rom. 12:6, etc.

absolutely necessary to salvation; it will be hard to define and we know not by what rule to proceed. In the general, it is exceeding dangerous to lessen the misery of man's nature, the merit and satisfaction of Christ, or the care of good works.¹³

J.I. Packer has written a helpful article on the Puritans on this point. In it he points out that the mainstream Puritan Federalists held that, "If one preaches the Bible biblically, one cannot help preaching the gospel all the time, and every sermon will be as Bolton said, at least by implication evangelistic".¹⁴ One often comes across this sentiment in the High and Hyper-Calvinism. On the one hand it is said that the Gospel cannot be summed up,¹⁵ while on the other hand it is said that all Bible truths are Gospel truths.¹⁶

This is not to say that Gill does not differentiate between 'greater' (fundamental, essential) and 'lesser' (circumstantial, secondary) doctrines.¹⁷ The former doctrines are what constitute the Gospel. In describing them Gill could well have quoted the Athanasian Creed: "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith ... whole and undefiled ..."

13. Quoted in I. Murray, The Invitation System, p.32. Even Machen speaks in this vein (The Virgin Birth, pp.395-396).

14. Packer, 'Puritan View', p.17 (cf. p.13).

15. For example, see John Murray, Works, vol.I, p.125. In the same way Brine cautioned that "it is a vain thing to attempt to reduce the Christian Belief, to one single Article of Faith" (Vindication, p.86).

16. Cf. Gill, Comm on Psa. 19:10. Engelsma: "This message, though centrally the message of Christ, His death, and resurrection, is as broad as the whole of Scripture" (p.60).

17. E.g., Comm on John 3:12, Isa. 58:7, Jude 3, Dan. 12:3; Cause, p.133; Comm on Psa. 147:19, Pro. 10:17; Body, p.373. Cf. Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.202; Pink, Practical Christianity, pp.169-182; Philpot, Meditations, vol.I, p.5. Philpot: "there can be no little errors; we mean as regards the vital, fundamental doctrines of our holy faith. There may be differences of opinion on minor points" (Sonship, p.15. Cf. p.44). Note that Philpot says this in the context of making Eternal Sonship "essential to salvation" (p.18). Arminians have nearly always drawn the distinction between essential and secondary doctrines (e.g., Fletcher, Works, vol.IV, p.198), but they differ among themselves even as the Calvinists among themselves. The extreme Arminians and the extreme (i.e. Hyper) Calvinists tend to disagree on the essential Gospel more than the moderates in either camp. The 'Middle-Way' theologians place themselves between both schools and attempt to have as much as possible in common with both so far as essentials are concerned. See Chapters II and XII. Needless to say, there is often considerable tension between the pro-offer and non-offer sides. Hypers tend to feel that offers reflect on the basic Gospel, but even Hoeksema could say of Schilder: "We agreed on fundamentals, and for the rest we agreed to differ" (in Gertrude Hoeksema, Therefore, p.309).

But which doctrines are fundamental?

Firstly, "the Gospel ... is nothing else than a declaration of what Jehovah, Father, Son and Spirit, have done and do".¹⁸ To be a true Christian one must believe in the Trinity.¹⁹ This excludes Arians, Socinians, Unitarians, polytheists and probably Sabellians. Furthermore, the Gospel is the revelation of God; it is God's name; it is God Himself.²⁰ Some difficulty arises when we consider the Gospel's relation to the eternal decrees. Gill holds that "the Gospel (is) called a decree ... because (it is) a revelation of the decrees of God" and it "is the sum and substance of both the decree and covenant of God".²¹ The problem lies in the relationship between the secret and revealed wills of God. If the Gospel is God's revelation, does it specify the position in the secret will of any individual to whom the Gospel is preached? Gill says no. The Gospel, he says, is the revealed will and states that there is a secret will and that God has elected some. But only when the Gospel comes in power to an individual can any know his place in the secret will.²² The Gospel does not reveal all the details of the decrees.²³

Now the Gospel is a proclamation of unconditional statements.²⁴ The Gospel may speak incidentally of a common grace but this is not essential to the Gospel itself. It is more concerned with special grace but only points to it; it does not always present it. The application remains vague. It does not say, "God loves all" or "God loves you", only "God loves some". Gill doubtlessly followed Crisp's dictum: "Christ cannot, Christ will not speak more from heaven than he doth in the Gospel".²⁵ De Jong noted the same pattern in Hoeksema's scheme:

18. Comm on Psa. 105:1.

19. Comm on Heb. 11:6, Acts 20:20. But cf. on Heb. 5:12. See also Popham, Sermons, vol.I, p.202; vol.IV, p.48; Roe, p.65; Stockell, A Confession of Faith, p.9; Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.20; Huntington, Substance, pp.34-38. For many Hyper-Calvinists this means that the doctrine of eternal sonship is of the essence of the Gospel, for without it there is no doctrine of the Trinity. See Chapter V, Section E.

20. Comm on Deut. 32:3, Psa. 77:17 and often. It is often said that the Gospel reveals God's perfections because it is a 'transcript' of the divine attributes (Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.17, 199-203, 214). This refers to the whole Bible (ibid., vol.II, p.58), but especially the Gospel. Low Calvinists agree: "As the law is a transcript of the divine nature, so also is the gospel" (Bellamy, True Religion Delineated, p.321).

21. Comm on Micah 7:11, Psa. 2:7. So too Pierce, Sermons Doctrinal, vol.II, p.144.

22. Body, p.72.

23. S & T¹, vol.I, p.481.

"Hoeksema tended to transmute preaching into the report of certain objective truths, i.e., truths which do not apply to all gospel-addressed sinners".²⁶

Gill also describes Christ "in his person and grace" as "the sum and substance" of the Gospel.²⁷ The Gospel

lies in these things, that he is really and properly God, and truly man; that he is the Son of God, and the Mediator between God and men; that he is the Messiah, who is actually come in the flesh; that he died and rose again the third day; is ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, and will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness; and that by his obedience, sufferings, and death, he is become the Saviour of sinners, and that none can be saved but by him.²⁸

Consequently "the main and fundamental doctrine of the Gospel [is] his sacrifice and satisfaction",²⁹ especially the blood atonement.³⁰ Gill

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24. Body, p.84 and often.

25. CAE, vol.I, p.47. Cf. Fuller, Works, p.151.

26. De Jong, p.187 (cf. also p.48). See Gill, Comm on Isa. 55:1; Cause, p.21; Lachman, p.16; Owen, Works, vol.X, pp.300, 311-312; Engelsma, pp.23-24.

27. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.339-340, and often. Gadsby often used the 'sum and substance' formula (Works, vol.I, pp.23, 118, 127, 137, 142, 144, 168, 172, 175, 195, 197-198, 202, 231-232), as did Tucker (Predestination, pp.192-193). Gadsby also said that the Gospel is "a most holy transcript of Christ" (Works, vol.I, p.196). With typical Antinomian boldness of expression Saltmarsh wrote, "The Gospel is Christ revealed. The Gospel is Christ himself" (Free Grace, p.138).

28. Cause, p.31. A similar summary is found in Comm on Mark 1:1 and Pro. 15:30. Elsewhere he includes the virgin birth as essential (Cause, p.109). In one place he says "that Christ ... is come in the flesh ... is the main article of the Gospel" (Comm on Gal. 4:11) because in it is contained all the other doctrines of the Gospel (Comm on I John 4:2). Gill disagreed with the statement of Hobbes that "the only article of faith which the Scriptures make necessary to salvation is, that Jesus is the Christ" (Cause, p.190), as did Brine, Vindication, pp.85-87, 100. Gadsby disagreed with the Sandemanians' doctrine to the same effect as the Deists: "And this is something more than simply believing that Jesus is the Christ. It is a believing with the heart that he is my Christ" (Works, vol.I, p.308. Cf. pp.277-315). In the line of orthodox Calvinism, Hypers have always held that the deity of Christ is of the utmost essence of the Gospel. See Huntington, Substance, pp.38-42; Brine, Vindication, p.78. Philpot once asserted that "the resurrection of Christ is the grand cardinal, fundamental doctrine of our most holy faith" (Sermons, vol.X, pp.93-94). Hoeksema: "The resurrection of the crucified One, - that is the Gospel" (IK, vol.II, p.4).

29. Comm on Ex. 27:7; S & T¹, vol.I, p.130. Engelsma: "The content of the preaching is Christ and Him crucified" (Hyper-Calvinism, p.60. Cf. pp.61-62). See Philpot's important note in Meditations, vol.III, p.122; and Brine, Vindication, pp.78-79.

30. Song, p.141.

always views this in terms of limited atonement.³¹ A universal atonement is contrary to the Gospel. We can say "Christ died for sinners" or "Christ died for some sinners", but not "Christ died for all sinners" or "Christ died for you". Again, the application is vague. (More will be said on this in the next chapter.)

The Gospel is Federal as well: "the Gospel ... is nothing else but an exhibition of the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises".³² The Gospel is but a transcript of the eternal Covenant and therefore includes the doctrine of election, "for it asserts election to be of grace".³³ If election is essential, so is reprobation, for the two are inseparable; one cannot understand election without contrasting it with reprobation.³⁴ Even a vast number of High Calvinists agree here that election and reprobation not only can but must be preached to the lost, otherwise the Gospel is meaningless.³⁵ Some High Calvinists waver on

31. E.g., Song, p.281; Comm on II Tim. 1:13, II Cor. 1:19. So too Huntington, Substance, pp.46-51; Warburton, Mercies, p.115. Gadsby explicitly stated that those who believe in universal atonement are not saved men (Sermons, p.40).

32. Comm on II Cor. 3:6. So too Comm on Psa. 2:7, 19:11, Jude 3, Rev. 4:6, Pro. 15:30, 16:24, II Cor. 5:19, Mark 16:15, II Tim. 1:13, Jer. 31:31, Acts 10:36, 10:42; Body, pp.210, 219, 373, 375; S & T¹, vol.I, pp.179, 535; S & T², vol.II, p.100; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.23; Philpot, Gospel Pulpit, vol.II, p.230; Answer, p.21; Stevens, Help, vol.I, p.27; Pink, Sermon on the Mount, p.352; Palmer, Truth Displayed, p.12; Law and Gospel, p.7; Moral Accountability, p.7. See Chapter V, Section C.

33. Comm on Acts 20:24. Election is considered essential in Comm on Pro. 27:7, Gal. 5:13, Eph. 3:10, Jude 3, Rev. 14:6, Acts 14:3, 20:20, II Cor. 1:19, Mark 16:15, Heb. 5:12, II Tim. 1:13; Song, p.281; Body, p.72; Hussey, Gospel-Feast, p.61; Huntington, Substance, pp.42-46; Parks, Five Points, p.57; Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, pp.201, 203. Note the first sentence of Pink's Election and Justification: "Election is a foundational doctrine" (p.9); but he may mean that it is foundational to all God's plans of salvation in eternity, not a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel per se. But see Wells's sermon, 'Eternal Election Essential to Salvation', in Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, 1865, pp.33-40. Wells considered election as essential to the Gospel as the atonement (Letters to Theophilus, vol.II, p.108), and Hanks even felt that "It is the central truth of all the Scriptures" (in Hanks et al, p.41). To reject election is antichristian (Gadsby, Sermons, p.32). And yet at times it seems that Calvin did not consider election to be of the bare essence of the Gospel (Sermons on Ephesians, p.44).

34. Stevens classed as enemies those who preach neither election nor reprobation (nor limited atonement). See Help, vol.I, p.195. Cf. Comm on Heb. 5:12.

35. So Hussey, Operations, pp.171-173; 381; Pink, Election and Justification, p.169; Toplady, Works, vol.III, p.215; John Murray, Works, vol.I, pp.126-127; Hulse, Free Offer, p.9; Billy Graham, p.30. Wells was particularly blunt on this point: "those who do not preach up eternal election, do not preach the gospel of God" (Reprobation and Election, p.44). Hyper-Calvinists stress that preaching election has a special way of working conversion in sinners (cf. Philpot, Tiptaft, p.27). Others who have been of the view that the doctrine of election must be preached include Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.49; vol.II, pp.31-34; Parks, Five Points, pp.36-37; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.219-232; and most if not all Hypers.

this point, however, while most Low Calvinists say that election is a secondary doctrine and therefore is not essential to the Gospel, however true it actually is in itself.

Free justification by faith alone is also termed "the principal doctrine of the Gospel" and "the article of the church standing or falling".³⁶ Gill does not specify the Hyper-Calvinist theory of eternal justification before faith here. The pardon and forgiveness of sin is also called "the great doctrine of the Gospel".³⁷ See too the doctrine of reconciliation.³⁸ In fact, in one of the rare instances in which Gill employs a Crispian extremism he even affirms that the "sum and substance" of the Gospel is that "God sees no sin in his people".³⁹ Adoption and regeneration⁴⁰ are also fundamental doctrines, as is final perseverance.⁴¹ As for anthropology, the doctrines of original sin and total depravity are essential on the one hand,⁴² and the need for faith and repentance on the other.⁴³

Strictly speaking, says Gill, the Gospel has no commands in it.⁴⁴ When, therefore, he elsewhere states that "there is a commanding voice" in the Gospel of grace,⁴⁵ he probably means the internal and effectual calling of the Holy Spirit. No man can give that command. Another possibility is that Gill means it in the improper sense: the Gospel requires faith and repentance. The Gospel is indicative, not imperative, in its essence but there are imperatives in the application.

The essence of the Gospel, then, is free and unconditional grace.⁴⁶

36. Comm on Dan. 12:3, Isa. 59:41; S & T¹, vol.I, pp.122-123. Eaton: "Justification is the very summe of the Gospel" (Honeycombe, pp.3, 6, and often).

37. Comm on Ezek. 47:8.

38. S & T¹, vol.I, p.263; Comm on II Cor. 5:19.

39. S & T¹. vol.III, pp.42, 49. Cf. Chapter X.

40. Comm on Acts 14:3, II Tim. 1:13; Brine, Vindication, pp.79-80; Huntington, Substance, pp.56-63.

41. Song, p.281; Comm on Jer. 31:10, II Cor. 1:19, II Tim. 1:13, Acts 20:20; Warburton, Mercies, p.115.

42. Comm on Acts 20:20, II Tim. 1:13; Hemington, Memorial, p.48; Engelsma, p.61. So also a number of High Calvinists (e.g., J. Murray, Works, vol.I, pp.128-129).

43. E.g., Body, p.376. Some even assert that one must believe that faith is a gift.

44. Comm on Acts 17:30, Psa. 19:8 and often.

45. Comm on Job 36:10. Little explanation is given in the text here.

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This is treated Hyper-Calvinistically as well. That is, common grace is hardly mentioned in the Gospel. The emphasis is on special grace, which is sovereign and irresistible. It is also particular. Even so, Gill occasionally sounded universal: "the Gospel of Christ ... is a declaration of the love and grace of God to sinners".⁴⁷ Properly understood, however, even this statement is particularist. These 'sinners' are 'sensible sinners', not all sinners. All of God's elect are sinners and they alone are made sensible of their condition.

The Gospel therefore is regularly equated with the 'doctrines of grace'.⁴⁸ We will examine this phrase again in Chapter XI but suffice it here to say that it refers to the distinctly Calvinistic doctrines (i.e., the five points of Dort).⁴⁹ It is no wonder that Gill often described the basic Gospel simply by enumerating the five points.⁵⁰ Abraham Taylor denounced Gill for making this equation.⁵¹ For Taylor, who accepted the five points, these doctrines are secondary. In the next century the Gospel Standard Baptists asserted that the Gospel alone is the standard of faith and practice. To some this sounds very evangelistic. In fact, however, it merely equated the Gospel with the five points. In this they were in agreement with Gill, though they used different language at times to express it. The two virtually agreed, but not entirely.⁵²

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46. E.g., Song, pp.12, 281; Comm on Pro. 15:30, Acts 20:24, 32; Hussey, Operations, p.230; Philpot, Gospel Pulpit, vol.IX, p.3.

47. Comm on II Cor. 6:1. Cf. Chapter XI.

48. E.g., Song, pp.46, 141, 152; Cause, p.90; Body, p.862; Comm on Psa. 145:8, I Cor. 2:9, Pro. 8:6, 16:24, 31:26, Dan. 10:6, Mark 4:24, Acts 20:24, Eph. 3:7. Cf. on Isa. 8:16, "the Gospel [is] the doctrine of grace"; and on Psa. 138:2, "grace may intend both the doctrine of grace, the Gospel of the grace of God preached by Christ, and the blessings of grace which come through him".

49. E.g., Comm on John 6:37, I Peter 4:10. Cf. Hulse, Billy Graham, pp.29-31; Robert Hall, Works, vol.IV, p.385 (quoted in Chapter XI, Section C below); Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.271; Engelsma, p.83; Alfred Hewlett, Defence of the Doctrines of Grace Commonly Called Calvinism. A glance through our bibliography will indicate that there have been many works on the 'Five Points', and one explanation is that Hyper-Calvinists have considered the Dortian Points to be "the leading doctrines of the Word of God" (Parks, Five Points, p.1). It would prove to be helpful to discover where the 'TULIP' order came from, since it is not the order given in the Dort Canons. We are indebted to Anthony Lane for this remark.

50. E.g., Song, p.281. So also Huntington, Works, vol.III, p.366; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.258-259; Warburton, Mercies, p.115.

51. Taylor, Address, p.33.

52. See Chapter X below.

Virtually everything we have said about Gill's Gospel can be said about the Gospel of High Calvinism. Spurgeon spoke for both schools in an important quotation:

... there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless you preach what now-a-days is called Calvinism ... It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the Gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith alone without works; nor unless we preach the sovereignty of God in his dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the particular redemption which Christ made for his elect and chosen people; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called.⁵³

These 'doctrines of grace' are sometimes called 'the mysteries of the Gospel'.⁵⁴ Gill speaks of these mysteries as "the deep things of God (which are) more hard to be understood, received, and digested" and "are more sublime".⁵⁵ Gill distinguishes between "the more easy doctrines of the Gospel" from "the more sublime doctrines of the Gospel"⁵⁶ (which are "meat for strong men"⁵⁷). Are the five points secondary after all? Not really. The 'strong men' referred to are those who can digest the 'sublime doctrines'; they are saints, though not all saints are strong men in the fullest sense (they are when compared with unbelievers, though). Stronger and more mature saints alone can best understand these doctrines. Younger, immature saints believe them but have but little understanding of them. The reference in the Commentary on Deut. 32:14 contrasts the sublime with the plain doctrines of the Gospel; the Commentary on Heb. 5:12 makes the same contrast and equates the plain with the 'first principles'; the Commentary on Ezek. 47:4 makes no contrast but only refers to the five points; the Commentary on John 3:12 contrasts the sublime with the easy doctrines of the Gospel, both (especially the former) including essential tenets of

53. New Park Street Pulpit, vol.I, p.50. Cf. Zens, 'Confusion Concerning Calvinism and Spurgeon Cleared', Baptist Reformation Review, vol.4, pp.25-26.

54. E.g., Comm on Mark 4:24, I Cor. 2:7, II Cor. 11:6.

55. Comm on Heb. 5:12, Ezek. 47:4. Also, "the gospel is frequently called a mystery ... only known by those to whom it is given" (Body, p.374).

56. Comm on John 3:12.

57. Comm on Deut. 32:14.

the faith.

The same situation occurs when Gill equates 'the mysteries of the Gospel' with 'the counsel of God'.⁵⁸ He often refer to the Gospel as 'the whole counsel of God'.⁵⁹ Sometimes this phrase refers to the entirety of Biblical revelation.⁶⁰ The phrase is taken from Acts 20:27 and Gill's Commentary there must prevail. There he explicitly says that it does not mean "the purposes and decrees of God" (which God alone knows) but rather "his revealed will in the Gospel, concerning the salvation of men by Jesus Christ, even the whole of the Gospel, every truth and doctrine of it, necessary to salvation".⁶¹ As we saw in Chapter V, this counsel of God is the wisdom of God in the eternal Covenant of Grace arising from the inter-Trinitarian Council. The Gospel is the transcript of that Council and Covenant and therefore can be called God's counsel. However, it is not an exhaustive transcript. The identity of the elect and reprobate are not revealed.

When Gill speaks of the whole counsel of God in the Gospel, he means that "the gospel is to be preached fully"⁶² by all ministers. That is, "not one part of it is assigned to one, and another part to another but the whole is assigned to them all".⁶³ To omit an essential tenet is to preach another Gospel. Why, then, did not Gill put together an all-inclusive statement of faith incorporating all these essential tenets? In spite of all his superlatives about which doctrines were the 'sum and substance' of the Gospel or 'the most important doctrine of the Gospel' (which phrases are used with respect to several doctrines) Gill had difficulty summing them all up. The answer is crucial to the offer question.

The solution may lie in what Packer said about the Puritan view of evangelism, that every Biblical sermon is to some extent evangelistic.⁶⁴

58. Comm on Psa. 55:14. Cf. on Pro. 19:21.

59. E.g., Comm on Psa. 119:24, Zech. 6:13, Job 12:13; S & T', vol.II, p.19. Cf. Comm on II Peter 1:12.

60. See a similar view in Comm on Psa. 19:10.

61. Comm on Acts 20:27. Cf. on Acts 20:20.

62. S & T', vol.II, p.17.

63. Song, p.138. Cf. S & T', vol.I, p.21; Comm on Gal. 1:23, Acts 5:20. Similarly, Hoeksema: "the whole gospel was revealed from the beginning of the world, and not only a part of it" (TK, vol.I, p.286).

High Calvinist preaching could not include all the essential tenets in a single message.⁶⁵ This is not simply because there were too many tenets but because these tenets had to be precisely stated. The preaching became rather scholastic. An all-inclusive presentation of the Gospel became impossible for a single preacher preaching to an unbeliever at a single time (remembering that the unbeliever's mind is blinded by sin).

This relates to the offer question on several counts. Firstly, Hyper-Calvinists like Gill were fundamentally no different from the Puritans in their preaching. They generally did not sum up that Gospel in any single sermon, as if they had only one sermon to preach to an heathen who had never heard the Gospel and would never hear it again. Such an occasion could arise on the foreign mission field (witness Carey!), but the Puritans and Hyper-Calvinists were not missionaries and operated in a 'Christian Society' (sic). Theirs was a lengthy process (how long is not specified) of rather detailed explanations. Witness the length and depth of the Westminster Larger Catechism. Consequently, when evangelists like Wesley and Whitefield came along claiming to preach the Gospel in a single sermon, to the orthodox Calvinist this appeared spacious. Certainly much was being left out!

Most Arminians like Wesley, a goodly number of Low Calvinists, and possibly even some moderate High Calvinists might respond in this way: does not Paul himself sum up the Gospel succinctly in I Cor. 15:1-14? The question is a good one and has been treated more recently by C.H. Dodd et al. This passage bears special reference to the place of the atonement in the kerygma (see our following chapter).

Secondly, Gill considered the five points to be of the essence of the Gospel. Since "damnable heresies (are) errors in the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel"⁶⁶ and Arminianism clearly rejects all five points, Arminianism is a damnable heresy. Arminians are probably not

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64. Packer, 'Puritan View', p.17.

65. This is frankly confessed by John Murray: "The measure of evangelism is the whole counsel of God ... this should not be understood to mean that the whole counsel of God can be compassed in each (Gospel) message" (Works, vol.I, p.125).

66. Comm on II Peter 2:1. Cf. Brine, Vindication, pp.75-106. On the implications for church discipline, see Chapter X.

true Christians.⁶⁷ Moreover, to Gill the free offer position is a mongrel Calvinism, opening the door to heresy. The essentials are at stake.

Now some of Gill's opponents themselves were free offer Calvinists. Such were Alverey Jackson and Abraham Taylor, not to mention Whitefield, Edwards, Doddridge, Watts and probably the anonymous 'B.A.'. How did they respond to Gill at this juncture? Since Gill was saying that they were perilously close to denying essential tenets by holding that these were true but not essential, some of them responded by suggesting that it was Gill who might be guilty of preaching another Gospel.⁶⁸ To him they were subtracting; to them he may have been adding.

As we stated at the outset of this section, the content of the basic Gospel is of the essence of the free offer controversy. Some Hyper-Calvinists have rejected the doctrine and practice of offers and Duty-Faith because the core of the Gospel was threatened.⁶⁹ One reply has been that one must differentiate the Gospel and the offer of the Gospel. Beart put it like this: "The essence of the gospel doth not lie in an offer of Christ, I only say it includes an offer; but the essence thereof is free promise, free grace and free gift".⁷⁰ The Hyperists partly agree. For them, the basic Gospel might be held by some pro-offer High Calvinists but they are in error because they do not see that free offers are inconsistent with the ideas of free promise, free grace and free gift. Furthermore, they err in holding that sinners have a duty to have saving faith beyond that which is required by the basic Gospel.⁷¹ This

67. See Chapter II, Section I. Gill and others waver on the final condemnation of Arminians. Some feel that though Arminianism itself is damnable, Arminians themselves are not necessarily damned men.

68. Jackson, The Question Answered, p.47; Taylor, Address, p.2.

69. For example, Foreman, Remarks on Duty Faith, p.20. Stockell rejected free offers by appealing to "What the Gospel is" (Redeemer's Glory, p.231). Pink: "Concerning the character and contents of the Gospel the utmost confusion prevails today. The Gospel is not an 'offer' to be bandied around by evangelistic peddlers" (Sovereignty, p.257. Cf. Objections, pp.13-14). Styles: "free-will, offered grace, human responsibility, universal invitations, Duty-faith, and kindred errors, are not only seen to have no place in Scripture, but to be utterly inconsistent with essential and paramount truth ... General invitations are often the point of departure from the truth of the Gospel" (Guide, pp.31, 73).

70. Truth Defended, Part II, p.50. Beart was writing against Hussey's Operations.

71. Wayman wrote against Jackson's idea of Duty-Faith: "It ought to be observed, that the question is neither about the attributes or perfections in God, the person or office of Christ; election, redemption, or efficacious grace; nor about adoption, justification or sanctification; ... Cont'd:

gets back to the charge that those such as Fuller were merely requiring assent to the Gospel and equating this with saving faith. Even Hypers believed that all men are in some sense obliged to believe the Gospel by way of assent, but this is not saving faith.

For all that the Hyper-Calvinists may say about the basic Gospel being accepted by some pro-offer Calvinists, most of them felt that the notion of offer was directly contrary to the very essence of the Gospel. Since the Gospel is part of the revealed will of God, the idea of the free offer reflects on God. Offers imply that in the Gospel God sincerely wishes to give something when in fact He does not.⁷²

Things would appear to be going around in circles, for evidently there are various views not only about what constitutes the Gospel but also what constitutes an 'offer'. It is meet, then, that we investigate that subject at this time.

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nor yet about any other doctrine of the glorious Gospel of the grace of God; but about the duty of unregenerate men" (Further Enquiry, p.vi). Later he adds, "It is not whether it is the duty of sinners to believe, but what they are required to believe, which is in question" (p.121).

72. Engelsma quotes Hoeksema: "the question is simply this: is that gospel according to its content a well-meaning and common offer on God's part?" (Engelsma, p.26. Cf. p.29).

C. OFFER TERMINOLOGY

The word 'offer' has been as much a shibboleth in the Hyper-Calvinist debate as 'homousios' was in the Christological controversies of the early Church. Its definition has varied some amongst writers and from one age to the next, but the main idea remains. The purpose of this section is to seek a definition of the word in the context of the theological discussions of the history of Calvinism.

One could fill a reasonable sized volume with quotations from Calvin in which the French and Latin equivalents of the word are found. A typical one would be this: "Christ suffered for the sins of the world, and is offered by the goodness of God without distinction to all men".¹ Similar citations can be located in the works of all the Reformers - even in Beza.² Likewise it is used in many of the important Reformed Confessions, such as in the Westminster symbols and its associate documents.³

It is significantly and prominently employed in the Canons of Dort,⁴

1. Commentary on Romans 5:18. Other pertinent examples can be found in Sermons on Isaiah, p.126; Tracts and Treatises, vol.III, pp.153-154. In an appendix we investigate how Calvin based the universal offer on a universal atonement. That Calvin believed in the free offer is accepted by Hulse, Free Offer, p.15; Toon, HC, p.130; Fuller, Works, pp.167-168; Pink, Gleanings From the Scriptures, p.271; and others. Hoeksema's school concede that the word is found in Calvin but not the idea given to it by later 'free offer' Calvinists. See Gertrude Hoeksema, Therefore, p.193; Engelsma, pp.36-37, 83-89.

2. Beza: "It ought not to seem absurd, that God unto reprobates, living in his Church, doth offer grace in his word and sacraments. For he doth it not to this end, that they may be saved, but that they may have less excuse than others, and at length be more grievously punished" (quoted in Twisse, Riches, Part II, p.167). This was the aspect of offers emphasized by Supralapsarians, which went beyond the orthodox High Calvinist idea and prepared the way for the Hyperist position. But Beza still used the word. The same state of affairs can be seen with Zanchius, who with Beza was most responsible for introducing the distinctive 'High' elements into Reformed theology (see Chapters IV and IX). There is a passage in his Absolute Predestination which deals with the question: "Thus argued St. Augustine against the Pelagians, who taught that grace is offered to all men alike; that God, for His part, equally wills the salvation of all, and that it is in the power of man's free will to accept or reject the grace and salvation so offered" (p.137, S.G.U. edition). Neither Zanchius nor Augustine are denying that offers should be made to all. Rather, they are saying that grace is offered to all men but not equally to all men. No man can accept the offer unless special grace is given and it is not given to all men, for God wills all men's salvation but not equally for all. Even so, Zanchius felt that the revealed will offers grace.

3. Confession, VII:3; Larger Catechism, Questions 32, 67, 68. So too in equivalent articles in Savoy and Baptist of 1689. It is also found in The Sum of Saving Knowledge and the Practical Use of Saving Knowledge. Even Styles acknowledged that Westminster used 'offer' in the symbols (Guide, p.60). Cf. James MacGregor, 'The Free Offer in the Westminster Confession'; and Shedd, Calvinism: Pure and Mixed, pp.24-29.

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though the school of Hoeksema contends that the meaning there is against the modern use of 'well-meant offer'.⁵ But surely they are quibbling to attempt to redefine the Dortian use of 'offer'. There were numerous other words which the delegates could have chosen instead. But we grant that the school of Hoeksema has a point in that the Dortian use of the word must be defined in the context of its statements on other things. In many ways this issue exemplifies the whole debate. If Dort's meaning is compatible with Hoeksema's, then Dort and all the Puritans who agreed with it were Hyper-Calvinists. But then the term 'Hyper-Calvinist' would be without meaning. In the same way, Hoeksema et al feel that the term 'offer' has changed in meaning over the years since it was first used by Calvin and Dort. Hence, when it had changed so much as to be more Arminian than Calvinist, the Calvinists called 'Hypers' were right to reject its use. So argue the Hypers.

It cannot be debated that the word was employed with all regularity throughout the Puritan era. It was used by a host of theologians representing all the main schools of Reformed theology. It was used by Low Calvinists, including the Neonomians and Amyraldians.⁶ Mainstream Federalists employed it often,⁷ as well as Supralapsarians.⁸ Moreover, even the Antinomians (forerunners of the Hyperists) had it in their vocabulary.⁹ Throughout the period up to the end of the seventeenth

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4. E.g., Second Head, Article IX (in Schaff, Creeds, vol.II, p.589; and Homer Hoeksema, Voice).

5. Cf. Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.356, 413-417, 495-502, 531-535. Alternatively, see Beart, Truth Defended, Part II, p.62.

6. E.g., Daniel Williams, Gospel Truth, p.80; Davenant, Exposition of Colossians, vol.I, p.262; Bunyan, Works, vol.II, pp.597, 683; and of course frequently in Baxter. One of Hussey's contentions, later picked up by other Hypers, was that offers were Neonomian. Curiously, some felt that it was the Neonomians and not the Antinomians who held that we must offer the Gospel only to 'sensible sinners', thereby opening the door to the rejection of all offers.

7. E.g., Manton, Works, vol.III, pp.330-335; Burgess, Spiritual Refining, p.582; Alleine, Alarm to the Unconverted, pp.113, 121, 139, 140 (and often, due to the nature of the book); Sibbes, Works, vol.VI, pp.246, 354; Clarkson, Sermons and Discourses, pp.438, 440, 444; Owen, Works, vol.X, p.300; Flavel, Works, vol.II, pp.55, 61, 67, 104, 110, 135 (see his 'Christ Knocking at the Door' treatise); Keach, Display, pp.158, 166-168; Traill, Works, vol.I, pp.234-251 (his treatise, 'By What Means May Ministers Best Win Souls?').

8. E.g., Ames, Marrow, pp.157-158; Twisse, Riches, Part I, p.218; Part II, pp.162-163; Chauncey, Godliness, p.213; Neonomianism Unmasked, Part I, pp.199-219. Chauncey's views extend the extreme views of Twisse in a way that showed how the leading Anti-Neonomians were beginning to make fatal concessions towards non-offers. But to our knowledge Chauncey never made that final step into the realm of Hyperism by rejecting the word itself.

9. Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.38, 47; Towne, Re-Assertion of Grace, p.78; Eaton, Honeycombe, pp.83, 85; Dell, Works, pp.136-137, 330. Saltmarsh: "Jesus Christ is offered to sinners as sinners"

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century we find the word nearly everywhere and almost always with the same basic meaning, though with various emphases according to different writers. But none of them explicitly rejected it. Some, of course, may not have used it; but to argue from this that they actually dismissed the word would be a gross argumentum e silentio. In all our researches we have not found a single instance in which the word was explicitly rejected by any Reformed divine or preacher previous to the year 1700.¹⁰

Similarly, the word has enjoyed a continued usage down to the present. In the eighteenth century it could be found in all the most important Reformed literature,¹¹ with the exception of the Hyper-Calvinist books.

Now a few Hyper-Calvinists have argued that some of the Puritans rejected the word.¹² But they give neither example nor documentation and we seriously question their contention. We do not say that there were some who rejected the idea of 'offer'. At this point we are simply concerned with the use of the word, whatever it has meant in any period of time.

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(Free Grace, p.184. Cf. pp.141, 184-190, 202-203). Cf. Toon, HC, p.63, 93; John Edwards, Crispianism Unmasked, pp.29-30; Wilson, vol.IV, p.222; Samuel Crisp, 'Memoir of Crisp', in CAE, vol.I, p.xxvii; Bogue and Bennett, vol.IV, pp.392-394; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.271; Young, Encyclopedia of Christianity, vol.I, p.277. Hoeksema somehow felt that the 'Higher Calvinists' of the 1640's (as he termed the Antinomians) did not accept the free offer (IK, vol.III, p.446); but Saltmarsh's quote alone should show that the Antinomians were far from the view taken by Hyper-Calvinists, even if the two groups were similar on many other issues.

10. Engelsma (pp.72, 80) disagrees with the evidence given by Hulse's Free Offer, but rather than cite any examples of explicit rejections of the word he argues about the meaning of the word. On the Hyper-Calvinist view of the Puritans' free offer, see Hemington, Remarks, p.19; Philpot, Reviews, vol.II, p.584. Hypers have disagreed with the Puritans' examples of offers; some have even excused them; but rarely have they denied that the Puritans gave offers. That all pre-1700 Reformed divines accepted offers is the view of Lachman, p.36; De Jong, p.134; Iain Murray, 'Free Offer and the Marrow', p.8.

11. E.g., Marrow of Modern Divinity, with Thomas Boston's notes, pp.119, 126-127, 139, and often; the Erskines, in Gospel Truth, pp.355, 385; Edwards, Works (1834 ed.), vol.II, p.156. Low Calvinists were especially prone to use the word, so it is found with great regularity in Watts, Doddridge, Bellamy et al.

12. Pink wrote that "the Reformers and nine-tenths of the Puritans" believed in Duty-Faith and free offers. We should like to know who the other one-tenth include, but Pink gives no names (Gleanings From the Scriptures, p.267). Pink might well be relying on Gill, Cause, p.184, where he says much the same thing - again without examples. Elsewhere Gill said that those Puritans who spoke of offers wrote and spoke in a "loose and unguarded way" and thereby "tended to pave the way for Neonomianism" (S & T, vol.III, p.58).

The evidence shows that the first Calvinists to actually reject the word were Richard Davis and Joseph Hussey, though it is difficult to prove exactly which one was the first. As we said in Section A above, Davis was active in evangelism at one time and naturally spoke of 'offers' in his preaching and writing.¹³ Towards the close of the Neonomian Controversy at the turn of the century he came to doubt the validity of the word as used in common theological parlance. Note the unusual tenor in the following extract:

God never designed that offers of grace should be made to all, but only to the elect ... Altho' the ministers of the Gospel must offer the grace of the Gospel to all men that hear them universally without exceptions, because they know not who the elect are, yet God designs his offered grace and salvation only for the elect.¹⁴

At this stage Davis still accepted that ministers can give offers. What he was questioning is whether God earnestly intends to give what is offered. In other words, Davis was wrestling with the secret and revealed wills. How can the revealed will offer what the secret will does not plan to bestow? Eventually this tension broke and Davis rejected that in the revealed will God offers grace. But it appears that these were his conclusions in private, for we do not find them in print. Gill and others testify to them.¹⁵

13. Glass quotes Davis: "a saviour offered most freely to the chiefest of sinners ... the grace we offer in preaching the Gospel is indefinitely for sinners, as sinners, and infinitely free for the chiefest of them" (The Early History of the Independent Church at Rothwell, p.140).

14. Davis, Truth, p.16. Cf. Rehokosht, p.16. The difficulties of this position could be found in those such as Hawker, moving some to think that Hyperists felt that offers can be made to the elect but to nobody else (cf. Colquhoun, The Free Offer of the Gospel, p.23). The view is the result of Supralapsarianism and was found in Twisse: "As for glory or salvation, we offer it unto none, (neither do we teach that God makes offer of it unto any) but to such as finally persevere in faith and repentance" (Riches, Part I, p.173). Mason misunderstood Piscator on this point, so Twisse summed up the position he shared with Piscator: "undoubtedly God offers grace ... with a purpose to communicate it to all that shall believe, according to the judgement of Piscator, neither does he offer it with a purpose to communicate it upon a condition. For then grace should be conferred according to works, which is manifest Pelagianism" (Part II, p.156). Hence, it is offered conditionally to all but given unconditionally only to the elect. The former is the revealed will, the latter the secret will. But both Twisse and Piscator gave offers to all. Watts may have been thinking of Twisse and Davis in contending that some persons said that "God offers to no one" while others hold that "God offers only to the elect" (Works, vol.VI, p.284). We are not familiar with any who have expressed the non-offer exactly in the latter terms.

15. See Section A.

Joseph Hussey was in many ways quite similar to Davis. At first he opposed Davis's Crispianism, but that was because Davis was just a step ahead of Hussey on the road to Hyper-Calvinism. Like Davis, Hussey was active in evangelism in the 1690's. It must be assumed that he gave 'offers' in his preaching at this time, for his evangelistic book, The Gospel-Feast Opened often spoke of 'offers'.¹⁶ Even then Hussey had a Crispian air about him and soon he was in agreement with Davis's doctrinal Antinomianism. And then the two of them came to reject the word 'offer'. The first actual rejection of it in print came in Hussey's Glory of Christ,¹⁷ but very soon thereafter he felt so strongly about the matter that he wrote God's Operations of Grace But No Offers of Grace. In this important treatise Hussey not only denounced his former views of offers, but he gave the definitive exposition of 'non-offer' theology.

It is vital to observe that his arguments have been used ever since by other Hypers, but it is more significant to see that though the preparation for his theology came gradually in the Neonomian Controversy and before, the actual break with 'offer theology' came suddenly. Furthermore, Hussey did not do this because he felt that the word began to take on a new meaning. Rather, he rejected it because his own theology took on new forms. What's more, he felt that his new views were but the logical extension of views which preceded his rejection. That is to say, earlier High Calvinists had taught certain premisses which would logically demand the conclusion which Hussey reached. They themselves did not explicitly reach that conclusion, but Hussey felt that the time had come for a consistent development of Reformed theology in this direction.

Since it is apparent that much of the controversy surrounds the meaning of the word 'offer',¹⁸ it is necessary to investigate its meaning. This is to move towards answering John Murray, who thinks that "the question then is, 'What is implicit in, or lies back of, the full and free offer of the gospel to all without distinction?'"¹⁹

16. E.g., pp.398, 400, 415, 421, 425, 428, 441. Earlier (pp.324-340) he summed up his views on invitations.

17. In this he repudiated The Gospel-Feast Opened. See pp.6-7, 313, 904-908.

18. So, more or less, Berkouwer, Divine Election, pp.222, 227; Hulse, Free Offer, p.14; Iain Murray, 'Free Offer and the Marrow', p.8. Cf. Engelsma, pp.37-38; James Haldane, The Doctrine of the Atonement, pp.118-120.

From the Hyper-Calvinist perspective, the word has been the subject of several definitions and discussions. In the early nineteenth century William Palmer went into the subject at considerable detail in his Free Enquiry Into the Subject of Offered Grace and General Invitations. Before charting the reasons for rejecting offers he explored the meaning of the term itself from several angles, including a comparison of various entries from current English dictionaries.²⁰ His investigation then proceeded to show that the accepted use of the word was contrary to true Calvinistic principles.

Herman Hoeksema was another one who has felt the need to define the term as precisely as possible for the purpose of rejecting it. Accordingly he put forth four elements which are indispensable to an 'offer'. De Jong gives them as follows:

First of all, the term contains the idea of an honest and sincere desire on the part of the offerer to give something. Without such an earnest will and desire on the part of him who makes the offer, the offer would not be honest or upright. Second, there is included in the idea of offer the fact that the offerer possesses that which he extends to some person(s). In the event of acceptance the offerer must be in a position to impart that which is offered. Third, the offerer reveals by his offer the desire that it be accepted.. Fourth, the one who offers something does so either conditionally, or upon the condition that he is aware that the recipients of the offer are able to fulfill the condition ... If any one of these elements is eliminated from the concept, the idea of offer is no longer retained.²¹

Schilder was one who differed with Hoeksema, not only on the acceptance of the word but also on the definition of the word. He suggested a revised definition:

There are two ways in which one can offer something. First of all, a person can offer something on a 'take-it-or-leave-it' basis. The recipient of the offer has the right to decline the offer. If he declines, his declension makes very little difference with respect to the ultimate issues of life ... Secondly, one can offer something in the context of covenanted stipulations. Upon the basis of an agreement

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19. The Free Offer, p.4.

20. Free Enquiry, pp.10-11, 16-18.

21. De Jong, p.43. Cf. Engelsma, p.31.

previously made known, the person (gift) presented (offered) must be accepted. There is an urgent appeal which obligates.²²

Hoeksema rejected offers on the basis of his definition, while Schilder accepted them on the basis of his. But surely there is some overlap between the two definitions. Nobody thinks that the Gospel offer is of the first sort in Schilder's description. Not even Schilder would accept this. As for the second, Schilder is saying that offers include conditions (stipulations) upon the basis of an agreement (covenant). But this is not bilateral; it is not between equals. It is unilateral; it is commanded. Earlier we saw how this seems to go against Hoeksema's idea of covenant, which he does not feel is the idea of agreement and stipulation. But Schilder points out that it is not a bilateral agreement as such. To a large extent the two theologians are complementing each other, though to Hoeksema it was a matter of contradiction.

As for Hoeksema's four qualities, the first and the third are virtually the same. They have to do with the idea of 'well meant' or sincere, which to Hoeksema feels could only have meaning in the secret will (intention) because all of God's desires necessarily come to pass. But as we saw in Chapter III, this is to portray the secret will enveloping and virtually negating the revealed will. Thus, the ideas of promise and special grace do away with the notion of offers, for the idea of offer is based upon the false notion of universal grace.²³

Furthermore, Hoeksema rejected offers on the basis of the second quality. Granted, God's grace is infinite but it is not universal. To be more to the point, God does not have salvation to give to all men, for it was not provided for all in the eternal Covenant (call it what you will) nor did Christ purchase it for all men. One must be very careful not to preach "All things are ready" so as to imply that God has all things relating to salvation ready to give to all men. This is just not so.

22. De Jong, p.69 (cf. p.57). Berkouwer feels that Hoeksema considered the offer "as analogous to human offers without urgency or appeal: take it or leave it" (Divine Election, p.227).

23. Cf. Hoeksema, Eating and Drinking Christ, pp.161-163; Engelsma, pp.31, 34. See Section D and Chapter XI below.

The fourth quality also goes against our giving offers. God gives unconditionally, not offers on the basis of a condition. "An offer is a conditional proposition."²⁴ And this is accepted by all concerned. But this would make salvation dependent upon Man and not God. It would then be by works rather than by faith. It is useless to point out to Hoeksema and the others that some Calvinists have felt that faith and repentance are conditions but not works as such. To even suggest such an idea is looked upon as Neonomianism. Moreover, the idea of conditions goes against the truth of free promise. God's promises are unconditional, therefore (says Hoeksema) there are no offers.²⁵ (All this will be looked at again in another context).

Erroll Hulse is another who has sought to find the exact meaning of the word 'offer'. He offers the following definition:

The word means a proposal to give or do something, to tender for acceptance or refusal. To carry this forward, we could say that an offer means that someone is proposing or expressing willingness to do something conditional upon the assent of the person addressed.²⁶

Being a High Calvinist, Hulse omits the idea of intention. He does not feel that the offer immediately has to do with the secret will but rather with the revealed will. Since there is such a thing as common grace, there is a valid sense in which God expresses the desire to give something. But note that Hulse includes the idea of conditions, which Hyperists reject. They accept the definition and reject the word it defines.

It is often pointed out that the term 'offer' does not occur in Scripture in the context of 'offering' the Gospel, grace or whatever.²⁷

24. Eating and Drinking Christ, p.167; IK, vol.II, p.707; The Gospel, p.14. To Gill, an unconditional offer is a contradiction (S & T¹, vol.II, pp.119, 146-147; Cause, p.184).

25. Cf. Hoeksema, Eating and Drinking Christ, pp.166-167; IK, vol.I, pp.279-294, 330-331; vol.II, pp.491, 693-712; Gill, Cause, p.17; Comm on Eph. 1:8; Song, p.130. Cf. Bourn, The Birmingham Dialogue, Part II, p.64.

26. Free Offer, p.13. Hulse appears to be relying on the definition given in the Oxford English Dictionary. As Palmer has shown, most of the older dictionaries give much the same definition as here.

27. E.g., Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, p.232; Styles, Guide, p.31; Hazelton, Sermons, p.10; Gill, S & T¹, vol.II, p.146; Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, p.707; The Gospel, p.14; Eating and Drinking Christ, p.167. Engelsma: "Not a Biblical term, it is today so loaded with Arminian connotations that it is no longer serviceable. Instead of an offer of the gospel, we should speak of the call of

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God gives, not offers. God does not consult the will of men, nor does He give a choice.

Palmer, however, is more frank than most in admitting that there is an instance in the Bible in which God 'offers' something (II Sam. 24: 12). In this reference God 'offers' three choices or alternatives to David in which he will be chastened. But Palmer dismisses this as irrelevant to the free offer question, for in this text God is not offering grace but a penalty. Besides, the Lord is there 'offering' three things whereas in the supposed 'free offer' nobody is suggesting that there are more than two choices. Those favouring free offers reply in a variety of ways to Palmer and the others. Some say that though the exact word is not in Scripture the idea is there.²⁸ Others say that Hypers are inconsistent, for do not the Hypers themselves accept certain vital theological words which they admit are not in Scripture (e.g., Trinity, eternal generation, secret will, etc.)?²⁹ Still others feel that those such as Gill and Hoeksema are quibbling - and inconsistently so.³⁰

The discussion about the word 'offer' is expanded when we look at how other similar words are accepted or rejected. 'Tender' is another word much debated, but usually it is accepted.³¹ 'Propose' and

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the gospel - as Scripture does" (p.37). Hussey went so far as to say that not only does not Scripture ever speak about God 'offering' Christ to us, but Scripture rather says that the only 'offering of Christ' was that upon the cross. To offer Christ would now be to recrucify Him and offer Him to the wrong persons. See Operations, p.23; Oliver, 'Survey', p.9. This argument is rare with Hyper-Calvinists but has much to do with the idea of limited atonement. Palmer put forth a similar argument: 'offer' is the same as 'sacrifice'; therefore God does not offer anything to us. If God were to offer grace, He would then be 'sacrificing' His truth. See Free Enquiry, p.11. Low Calvinists contend that Christ offers Himself to all men on behalf of God because He offered Himself to God on behalf of all men. Therefore faith receives and is based upon the atonement. Limited atonement logically leads to Hussey's error and Palmer's absurdity, both of which 'sacrifice' the truth.

28. Aikman, Judgement, pp.79-81.

29. See Chapter II.

30. Hyperists naturally deny that they are quibbling over words (e.g., Engelsma, p.37; James Haldane, The Doctrine of the Atonement, p.119). Aikman charged Hypers with consciously distorting the meaning of Scripture "by a base, disingenuous quibble which they set up upon the word 'offer', studiously [seeking] to evade the force of Jehovah's command" (Judgement, p.79). One such quibble would be Stevens's assertion that we cannot really invite men in the way that God invites men, because many invitations in the Bible are spoken "after the manner of men", or anthropopathically, which means that God does not really and earnestly desire that all invitations be accepted (Help, vol.II, p.22).

31. Gill, Cause, pp.88, 156, 164, 184, 210; CAE, vol.I, p.114 note; Crisp, CAE, vol.I, pp.5, 47, 114; Towne, Re-Assertion of Grace, p.78; Burgess, Spiritual Refining, p.582; Narrow of Modern

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'proposal' are often approved but not always. Hussey and Gill equated them with 'offer' and in this context rejected it.³² Elsewhere Gill accepted 'propose'.³³ Similar to the word 'propose' is the idea of 'offer' in the context of a marriage proposal (hence, "to offer one's hand in marriage").³⁴ This also disqualified both terms, for God does not propose marriage in the revealed will, for it has already been secured in the secret will. On the other hand, there may be a sense in which the Gospel 'proposes' marriage in that it is a transcript of the Covenant of Grace. Beyond this, it can be said that the Gospel 'proposes' certain things to be believed or received.³⁵ Moreover, Christ is Himself 'proposed' in the Gospel in that He is 'set forth' therein³⁶ – a word and a concept acceptable to Hyperist theology.³⁷

The Hyper-Calvinists have no objection to phrases in which it is said that in the Gospel God holds forth,³⁸ stretches out,³⁹ extends,⁴⁰

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Divinity, p.139; Bunyan, Works, vol.II, p.349; Hussey, Operations, p.113; Owen, Works, vol.X, p.300; Flavel, Works, vol.II, p.49; Hulse, Free Offer, p.14; Pink, Atonement, p.281. It was rejected by Styles, Guide, p.62; Ramsay, Election, p.206; Pink, Holy Spirit, p.89. The word 'tender' was questioned mainly because of its financial overtones, which could threaten the idea of free grace. See below.

32. Hussey, Operations, p.374; Gill, Comm on Acts 13:26, II Cor. 5:20. So too Colyer, Good News, p.70. Craner: "He did not propose, or make an offer, nol but he gave ..." (Manual, p.70). Foreman rejected 'proposals' but accepted 'purposes' (Duty Faith, p.26). Pink seems to have rejected the words in Holy Spirit, p.89.

33. So too Brine, Certain Efficacy, p.75; Manton, Works, vol.III, pp.330-335; Hulse, Free Offer, pp.13-14; Parks, Five Points, pp.67, 68; Pink, Sovereignty, p.173.

34. OED, vol.III, p.79; Hulse, Free Offer, p.13; Boston, Marrow of Modern Divinity, p.134 note; Beart, Truth Defended, Part II, pp.61-62.

35. "The Gospel contains certain things to be believed; it proposes and directs to the great object of faith" (Comm on Gal. 1:23).

36. In the Gospel "Christ the foundation of hope is proposed, and set forth before awakened and convinced sinners" (Comm on Titus 1:2. Cf. on Joshua 24:25; Body, p.314). Notice that here Gill limits to whom Christ is proposed and set forth – sensible sinners. Beart argued that 'offer', 'propose' and 'set forth' are synonyms and therefore to reject 'offer' is to reject the other two (Truth Defended, Part II, pp.51-52).

37. Comm on Eccl. 11:7; Titus 1:2; S & T, vol.II, p.144; Engelsma, pp.60, 65-66. Raven: "in the preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ one thing is essential, and that is for Christ as a necessity to be clearly set forth" (Sermons, p.187). Compare 'set up' in Comm on Isa. 45:22, and 'sets before' in Comm on Psalms. 38:3, 78:7.

38. Comm on Psalms. 45:6, 50:2; Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.5; Kershaw, Grace Alone, p.26; Hawker, Works, vol.IX, p.475. Compare: 'hold up' (ibid., p.506) and 'hold out to' (Beaton, Foundation Truths, p.27).

39. Comm on Psalms. 45:6.

40. Body, pp.498-499; Sawyer, p.290. This word has special relevance in our discussion on Calvin and the 'extent' of the atonement, for which see our appended excursus.

reveals,⁴¹ shows,⁴² directs,⁴³ bestows,⁴⁴ imparts,⁴⁵ communicates,⁴⁶ or encourages.⁴⁷ Skepp said that we can give "exhortations, invitations, expostulations, and arguments ... with suitable promises and encouragements and ... counsel, admonition, and threatenings".⁴⁸ As we shall see later, however, there is much difficulty with 'invitations'. For example, Gill could accept the word but with reservations, while elsewhere he rejected it.⁴⁹

The words which are used most are ones which have to do with preaching. Words such as call, preach, proclaim, declare, publish, speak, and teach are acceptable, but each of these are different from offer.⁵⁰ Parks contrasted offers with plain statements of fact.⁵¹ John Johnson was of the mind that "The Gospel of Christ is not an offer of salvation but a glorious publication of salvation".⁵² Engelsma comments:

In the past, the word 'offer' from the Latin word 'offero' was used by Reformed men to describe God's activity in the preaching of the gospel because the word has originally the meaning 'bring to (someone)', 'present (something or

41. Comm on Eccl. 11:7.

42. Comm on Isa. 45:22, Luke 19:9.

43. Comm on Pro. 4:11, 12:18, Psalms 19:9, 45:6, 38:3, Gal. 1:23, Luke 19:9.

44. Body, pp.498-499; Cause, p.156.

45. Comm on Acts 20:27.

46. Comm on Acts 20:27.

47. Comm on Psalms 38:3, 45:6, 78:7, Luke 19:9; Cause, pp.19-20; Body, p.736.

48. Divine Energy, p.61. Cf. Owen, Works, vol.X, p.300.

49. See Comm on Pro. 9:3, 25:11, Eph. 1:8, Isa. 55:1; S & T¹, vol.II, p.147; Body, p.736; Cause, pp.15, 19-20, 87; Hussey, Operations, pp.405, 407; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.128; vol.II, p.68; Philpot, Gospel Pulpit, vol.VII, p.193. Philpot said that God's invitations "are confined to God's quickened family ... but all these are freely invited" (Sermons, vol.VIII, pp.19-20. Cf. vol.IX, pp.53-66, especially, p.54). Pink: "God has given not an 'invitation' for men to act on at their pleasure, but a 'commandment' which they disobey at their peril" (John, vol.II, p.289).

50. S & T¹, vol.II, pp.119, 146-147; Cause, pp.88, 164, 210; Comm on I Peter 4:6, Gal. 1:23, II Cor. 5:19-20; Body, p.539. On preferring preaching to offering, see Ramsay, Election, p.206; Hoeksema, The Gospel, p.14; IK, vol.I, p.465; Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.41; Depoyster, Fragments, p.61; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.256-257; Wilks, p.34; West, The Command to the Poor; Bradbury, I Don't Like Calvinism; J.A. Haldane, The Atonement, p.103; Colyer, Good News, pp.141-142, 145, 152-157; Palmer, Free Enquiry, often; John Gadsby, Letter to Aikman, pp.4-18. This was questioned by Colquhoun, The Free Offer of the Gospel, pp.25-26. Palmer maintained that though we must preach to all men, we cannot offer to anyone (Baptismal Regeneration, p.152). See Section E.

51. Five Points, p.xvi.

52. Election of God, p.37.

someone to somebody)'. All Reformed men hold that Christ is presented in the preaching to everyone who hears the preaching. In this sense He is 'offered' in the gospel.⁵³

Since that idea has changed, says Engelsma, we should revert back to its original meaning and use words such as 'call'. Now this word is accepted by all concerned and has to do with the external call of the Gospel.⁵⁴ Hussey taught that a preacher can only preach, not offer.⁵⁵ It might surprise some to learn that this was Pink's view as well: "The business of the preacher is not to 'offer' Christ to sinners, but to preach him, expounding the doctrines of the Gospel".⁵⁶ The main reason for this is that the preacher can give the message preached but he cannot give what is offered.⁵⁷ High Calvinists could not go as far as the Hyper-Calvinists but it is notable that they sometimes preferred preaching to offering while not entirely rejecting the latter.⁵⁸

'Offers' can be resisted, but the 'operation' (Hussey) and 'divine energy' (Skepp) of the Holy Spirit cannot be resisted.⁵⁹ The Holy Spirit 'applies' but never 'offers'.⁶⁰ Since we are not God, we cannot offer. We can 'recommend' but not 'offer'.⁶¹ (It hardly needs to be added that everything said in this section also refers to the word 'proffer'.)⁶²

53. Hyper-Calvinism, p.36. Also, "Indeed, the 'offer-man' is unable to call sinners. Inherent in the idea of the call is a lordly authority ... An 'offer-man', if he is consistent, must beg sinners" (p.67). Critics feel that Hypers are too proud to offer grace but prefer legalistically to lord it over men; hence they preach Law to all but offer the Gospel to none.

54. Cause, pp.15, 19, 155.

55. Operations, pp.38, 52, 60-62, 72, 113, 125, 313; Glory, p.545. Numerous Hyper-Calvinists have appealed not only to Hussey's Operations but even to the very title of the book to substantiate their claims that we can preach but not offer. See, for example, Hazelton, Hold Fast, pp.14-15.

56. Atonement, p.288. So too with regard to invitations (Sovereignty, p.257).

57. Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.256; De Jong, pp.16-17, 57; Hussey, Operations, pp.48-49.

58. E.g., Keach, Display, pp.120-130.

59. Cf. Cause, p.156; S & T, vol.II, p.119; Comm on Matt. 18:34, Rom. 1:16. Gill's favourite phrase in this context is 'the power of God'. Irons contrasted 'offer' and 'operation' (Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.138). Cf. Wells, Experience, pp.49-50. Parks thought that offers are without power (Five Points, p.45). Hoeksema wrote a book in Dutch whose title translates as A Power of God unto Salvation, Or Grace No Offer (Engelsma, p.25). Pink chided those who "lessen the strength of the invincible work of the Holy Spirit to an offer of the Gospel which sinners may accept or reject as they please" (Godhead, p.28).

60. Cause, pp.103, 156.

61. Gadsby: "Such a soul can recommend the Lamb of God to guilty sinners" (Works, vol.I, p.205).

62. Cf. Hussey, Operations, pp.v-vi; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.257, 260; Styles, Guide, pp.28-29, 62, 66. On the other side, see Comrie, The ABC of Faith, p.120; Owen, Works, vol.X, p.300.

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Moving on, the word 'offer' is to be rejected because it is a market word, which goes contrary to the doctrine of gift of grace. Even Pink agreed: "Such a Christ is not to be offered or proffered, sold or given by sinful men. He is that unspeakable gift of the Father to as many as He has ordained to eternal life, and none others".⁶³ As noted earlier, Crisp based his free offer on the very fact that grace and salvation are gifts.⁶⁴ This brings us to the meaning behind the term 'free'. Gill spoke of 'free promise' but rejected 'free offer'.⁶⁵ Similarly, Hyper-Calvinists have felt that if a choice has to be made they would choose free grace rather than free will. Since free will is behind the notion of the free offer, free grace is to be preached and not either free will or free offer.⁶⁶ Free grace is to be preached freely. Gadsby called it a 'free proclamation'.⁶⁷ Gill felt that preaching 'freely' meant two things. Firstly, it means "not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind".⁶⁸ Secondly, it refers to the method of preaching: openly, boldly, faithfully, consistently, constantly, fully evidently, plainly, and "without using ambiguous phrases or words of double meaning".⁶⁹ Even so, he still felt that the Gospel had to be preached

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In one place Philpot came near to the free offer view in describing the divine invitation as Christ's "proffered hand" to the Church, who "willingly accepts the offer" (Sermons, vol.X, p.57). In the context he seems to be saying that this is an invitation given only to the elect, for it refers to special calling and spiritual marriage. In any case, it is an extraordinary example to be found in Hyperist literature and is, to the best of our knowledge, without parallel. One other citation (ibid., vol.IV, pp.116-117) speaks of 'offers of grace' in a way which could easily be misunderstood as teaching the offer position, but the context shows that Philpot is really speaking of the position of 'free will, universal atonement and Wesleyism. Occasionally ambiguity crops up when Hyperists use 'offer' in other contexts. For example, Stockell: "Give me leave to offer one word of counsel to you, Madam" (Care, p.33); and Hoeksema: "In question form the apostle offers, as it were, a syllogism" (Good Pleasure, p.189).

63. Salvation, p.85. In similar wording Hussey stated, "Christ ... is neither to be offered, proffered, lent, borrowed, bought, sold or given of man" (Operations, pp.v-vi. Cf. pp.94-124). Pink also said that God does not offer salvation, because sinners have nothing to buy with (Beatitudes, p.12). So also Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.41.

64. CAE, vol.I, pp.38, 114; vol.II, p.108.

65. E.g., Song, p.130; Cause, p.17; Comm on Eph. 1:8. Crisp spoke of Christ as the 'free way' and described the promises of the Gospel as a 'free grant' (CAE, vol.I, pp.34-35; vol.II, p.108).

66. S & T¹, vol.I, p.243; Hussey, Operations, p.271. See Chapter XI below.

67. Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.68. Earlier he had said that Christ is "freely given" in the Gospel (ibid., p.65).

68. Song, p.255.

69. Comm on I Peter 4:6, Matt. 10:29, Acts 5:20, Eccl. 11:7, Mark 16:15, Gal. 1:23, Isa. 55:1, 4:5, Acts 20:27, Isa. 35:8, Deut. 32:3.

"in indefinite terms",⁷⁰ or what has been called "the restrictive way"⁷¹ as opposed to "indiscriminately".⁷² But no matter how narrowly or widely one preaches, one cannot offer grace to anyone - no, not even to believers.⁷³

'Free offer' was the debated term in mainstream Hyper-Calvinism, but 'well-meant offer' has been the debated phrase within the Hoeksema school.⁷⁴ In essence, however, they are one and the same. The first simply brings out the aspect that God wishes to give something without cost, while the second points to God's willingness that it be accepted.

One may wonder what is offered? Does it affect the debate? Yes, very much so because the objects offered are of the utmost importance. John Murray:

What is offered in the gospel? ... It is Christ who is offered. More strictly, he offers himself. The whole gamut of redemption grace is included. Salvation in all its aspects and in the furthest reaches of glory consummated in the overture.⁷⁵

To Saltmarsh, offering Christ is offering grace,⁷⁶ while Schilder preferred to speak of an offer of Christ rather than an offer of grace.⁷⁷ Bishop Butler wrote, "Christianity offered itself".⁷⁸ Flavel thought that reconciliation, peace and Christ in all His offices are offered,⁷⁹ while Keach offered "free forgiveness and peace in Christ" and "free justification".⁸⁰ Alleine was very generous: "God offers all needed grace

70. Comm on Isa. 55:1; Cause, p.152. This has special reference to preaching the atonement. See Chapter IX.

71. S & T¹, vol.III, p.58.

72. This is how 'offer' preachers often describe it (e.g., Hulse, Free Offer, p.4).

73. S & T¹, vol.II, p.119; S & T², vol.III, p.118; Cause, pp.88, 103, 156. Cf. Davis, Truth, p.21. On how we should preach, see further in Section E below.

74. In addition to the works of De Jong, Stebbins, Engelsma and Murray and Stonehouse, see Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.483-493. For an earlier discussion of the 'well-meant' sincerity of the offer, see Dabney, Discussions, vol.I, pp.282-313.

75. Works, vol.I, p.82. Cf. Custance, The Sovereignty of Grace, p.287.

76. Free Grace, pp.184-190.

77. De Jong, p.143.

78. Analogy of Religion, p.208.

79. Works, vol.II, pp.55, 61, 111.

80. Display, pp.158, 168.

to enable you (to repent and believe) ... Christ offers to help you out ... Christ offers a cure ... His righteousness, His grace ... assistance ... to cleanse you".⁸¹ The Gospel, wrote Eaton, offers "the promise of life, favour, satisfaction" and many other "blessings and benefits" - all of which "are offered freely".⁸² Bunyan and Preston offered righteousness,⁸³ Boston offered "the spiritual marriage,"⁸⁴ and Clarkson listed six things which Christ offers: His love, Himself, His blood (and all that was purchased by it), His comforts, His glory and His kingdom.⁸⁵ The French Confession of Faith of 1559 said that "all that is necessary for our salvation was offered",⁸⁶ and the Westminster standards posited that God offers life, salvation and grace.⁸⁷ The Practical Use of Saving Knowledge even offered the Covenant of Grace. Gill, of course, denied that anything whatsoever can be offered. He explicitly denied offers of pardon, reconciliation, salvation, justification, grace, Christ and the Covenant of Grace.⁸⁸ Hussey denied that the Holy Spirit is offered.⁸⁹

It should be obvious that there have been highly esteemed persons in favour of free offers, and though they have differed on small points they all employ the term 'free offer' in basically the same way. Consequently, we find two assertions impossible to accept. The first is that of Buswell: "The atonement is offered to all. On this point no firm Calvinist has the slightest doubt..."⁹⁰ Either Buswell is not aware of the Hyper-Calvinists or he does not consider them 'firm Calvinists'. The other notion we cannot accept is that of Engelsma: "Repudiation of the offer as the innovation of 'Patrons of Universal Grace' is not hyper-

81. Alarm to the Unconverted, pp.139-140.

82. Honeycombe, p.85.

83. Bunyan, Works, vol.II, p.597; Lachman, p.27.

84. Marrow of Modern Divinity, p.134 note.

85. Sermons and Discourses, p.444. Elsewhere he says that Christ offers happiness (p.440).

86. Article 13, in Schaff, Creeds, vol.III, p.367.

87. Confession, VII:3 (and so in parallels in Savoy and Baptist of 1689); Larger Catechism, Questions 67 and 68.

88. Comm on Matt. 18:34, II Cor. 5:19; Cause, pp.184, 210, etc.

89. Operations, p.67.

90. Systematic Theology, vol.II, p.142. A similar statement was made last century by the editor of the Works of John Owen: "It would be difficult to specify any Calvinists worthy of the name who hold that salvation should not be offered at all" (vol.X, p.141). On the specific question of the free offer and limited atonement, see Chapter IX, Section C below.

Calvinism; it is historic Reformed orthodoxy".⁹¹ Engelsma has built his case upon the assumption that the word 'offer' underwent a fundamental change at some point (he does not specify exactly when). This is more than merely saying that it is an ambiguous term⁹² or that it was better understood in the old days than it is now,⁹³ though Engelsma would probably posit that these were two stages it went through on the road to a new meaning. We should like to see some more documentation for his allegations, since what little he has offered does not entirely substantiate his case.

We say 'entirely' very intentionally because we feel that there is an aspect of the situation which Engelsma has indeed grasped but misapplied. We might even go so far as to say that this is an apt picture of the whole relationship between Low, High and Hyper-Calvinism. It is this: an examination of the vocabulary respecting free offers together with the doctrines of the relationship between the two wills of God (the decrees on the one hand and the Gospel on the other) reveals that there is a relationship which can be variously interpreted and developed, and that when this relationship becomes imbalanced in one's theology then inevitably the theological terminology will become altered. The record obviously shows that some have accepted words like 'offer' and some have not, and the reasons for this difference lies in the reasons for the lack of the original balance, whatever it was.

Those such as Hoeksema and Engelsma seem to have the whole matter in reverse.⁹⁴ That is, they feel that originally Calvin did not believe

91. Hyper-Calvinism, p.101. Engelsma's book is filled with such sentiments. He admits that the term 'offer' is in Calvin, Dort, Westminster and many Reformed theologians, but he feels that this "is of no consequence" (p.81).

92. Abraham Taylor, who opposed Gill in the Modern Question debate, believed in the use of the word but added, "as the word 'offer' is ambiguous, I should never advise you to stand up stiffly for it" (Address, p.15).

93. After stating that some good men believed in Duty-Faith, Dixon Burn admits that the words 'proposals' and 'offers' "seem to border upon the doctrine of Free-will; but they used them with a defined meaning which was better understood in their day than it is in ours" (The Great Religious Question, p.87). This must be interpreted in the light of what we said about Burn's confusion about the position of Gill, Hussey and Huntington.

94. Stebbins does not go to the same extreme as Hoeksema in his own theology of offers and this is reflected in his interpretation of the history of the relationships between the various forms of Calvinism with respect to the offer. His position more or less is that of High Calvinism. De Jong's interpretation is closer to the one we give herein, but he does not deal much with Calvin or the mainline Hyper-Calvinists. Toon's analysis is closest to that which we feel to be correct. Kendall puts forth an interpretation fairly similar as well with relation to Calvin

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in what later came to be known as 'well-meant offers', for Calvin supposedly was Supralapsarian and an adherent of limited atonement. Shortly after Calvin's death, it is held, his proper balance was questioned by Sublapsarians, Low Calvinists and Arminians, all of whom taught 'offers' and the latter two even believed in universal atonement. The lower down one got on this scale, therefore, the more we find the term 'offer' and the more it takes on a meaning much different from that originally intended by Calvin. The solution, suggests Hoeksema's school, is to get back to Calvin by rejecting the word (for it no longer means the same thing, thanks to those who have distorted Calvin's theology) and by rediscovering the great Reformed truths of Supralapsarianism and limited atonement.

As we said, one can hardly deny that there is a scale stretching from Arminianism in its many strains all the way up to Hyper-Calvinism, with considerable variety and numerous backwashes in between. One of the main purposes of this present work is to show the relationships between those Calvinist strains making up and leading to Hyperism. The error of Hoeksema and his followers is that they misplace Calvin in this scheme and thereby misinterpret most of what follows, including the terminology pertinent to free offers.

In the eyes of Engelsma, Calvin himself evidently would be classed as a Hyper-Calvinist were he to re-appear today.⁹⁵ We have heard this view before but generally it has come from those who are not well acquainted with the Reformer's works, nor with the varieties of Calvinism. In our opinion, the theory is as much without foundation as that which would contend that Calvin would be branded as an Arminian today. There is a grain of truth in both of these but in a complementary and opposite way. Were Calvin to actually appear today, the Hypers would call him an Arminian (or 'semi-Arminian') and the

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and the Puritans. Alan Sell's treatment is broader but incisively brings out many important inter-relationships in their historical progression.

95. "We have now found for the defenders of the well-meant offer of the gospel the original hyper-Calvinist - John Calvin himself" (p.89). This ironic statement must be interpreted in the light of Engelsma's overall position. Obviously he does not feel that Calvin went beyond Calvin. He is merely saying that those who are presently called Hyper-Calvinists (notably the school of Hoeksema) are in harmony with Calvin, and vice-versa. This must also be seen in the light of Engelsma's attempt to differentiate Hoeksema from Hussey, as he considers Hussey and mainstream Hyperism to be a deviant from Calvin. Cf. Sell, Debate, p.52.

Arminians would call him a Hyper-Calvinist. Those who accurately represent Calvin's theology at present today undergo these same erroneous classifications. But this state of affairs stems not from the correct understanding of Calvin in relationship to the other schools but the exact opposite - over-reacting against the others in such a way as either to claim Calvin for one's cause or to cast him into the extreme opponent's camp, both without proper warrant.

It is our contention that the position of Calvin has been best represented by those who have been called Low Calvinists.⁹⁶ Soon after Calvin's demise, opponents on both sides rose up in reaction against others in the Reformer's tradition.⁹⁷ This was the source of High Calvinism on the one hand and moderate Arminianism on the other. At this point all parties still believed in free offers, but the first camp added some modifications in the light of the new doctrine of limited atonement, while the second made other alterations owing to their variant doctrine of predestination. Soon more doctrines were added which were not in full harmony with Calvin, resulting in yet further variations in the doctrine of the free offer.⁹⁸ By the time of the Synod of Dort even further extremes on both sides had arisen, and this state of affairs continued through the Westminster Assembly. Supralapsarianism became the great extreme on the one side and made serious modifications to the free offer, and though the Antinomians presented an alternative form of Supralapsarianism, the free offer was beginning to suffer considerable tension as the more moderate Calvinists (High and especially Low) sensed that there were some unhealthy aspects of this growing extreme.⁹⁹

96. It is not the immediate purpose of our work to argue which of the schools, if any, are ultimately the correct representation of Holy Scripture. On definitions of these several schools, with a list of representative writers, see Chapter XII below.

97. This is not to say that there were not antecedents before that time. Indeed, there were definite precursors to the Arminian side even within Calvin's own lifetime, not to mention similarity to the Pelagians. It is beyond the scope of our investigations to discuss the ramifications of the Augustinian and Scholastic controversies, except to note that the predominance of a theology more akin to the Arminian reaction gave an added boost to the side which was not to be found in the 'Calvinist' side. Hence, Arminianism produced greater extremes than Calvinism. Sell's recent book, The Great Debate, more or less gives the same analysis of the development of the relationship between Calvinism and Arminianism after Calvin which we give, though we developed our conclusions independent of each other. As with our study, he gives more attention to Calvinism.

98. Some would specify the High emphasis and Arminian rejection of the doctrine of original sin as an example.

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On the other side, Grotius and Episcopius had gone beyond Arminius himself and their anthropology and soteriology were also altering the doctrine of the free offer.¹⁰⁰ This pattern continued into the further extremes of Arminianism, notably in the heterodox schools of Arianism and Socinianism.¹⁰¹ By the end of the Puritan era, historical events provided fertile soil for the further growth of the extremes on both sides, even as Calvin's death allowed the two factions to arise in the first place.¹⁰² The Neonomian controversy was the battle ground at this time and the doctrines relating to the free offer were the main issues.¹⁰³ As the battle raged, so did the extremists. On the Arminian side we see the birth of Deism, whose resemblance to Calvin was virtually non-existent.¹⁰⁴ On the other side Hyper-Calvinism came into being.¹⁰⁵

How does this relate to the free offer question? It can easily be shown that Calvin believed in free offers and universal atonement. Rather than the history of Calvinism being one in which the trend has been towards so-called 'Arminian offers and universal atonement', the

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99. If Supralapsarianism was a minority view among Calvinists at this time, doctrinal Antinomianism was in even less vogue. Consequently, the latter was opposed more than the former. Some Supras were not much against Antinomianism (e.g., Twisse), while others were vehement enemies (e.g., Rutherford). This is reflected in the further developments within Hyper-Calvinism - Hyper-Calvinists have differed with each other and with non-Hypers on many issues.

100. This is but to recognize that Arminianism is a 'Calvinist heresy'. Though there was significant input from non-Calvinist sources, Arminius himself had most of his roots in the Reformed branch of the Reformation. Some have referred to Arminianism as 'Liberal Calvinism'. See Chapter XII.

101. Even Hyper-Calvinists admit that there is some progression from bad to worse within Arminianism (cf. Chapter II, Section I above). We leave it to others to examine the relationship between the different schools of Arminianism, though we will touch on it again later.

102. The main events leading up to this critical moment were the Restoration, Savoy Conference, Act of Uniformity and Acts of Tolerance.

103. This is not to say that Arminians played a part in the Neonomian Controversy: they were involved in their own controversies (such as Latitudinarianism).

104. Though it has often been said that Deism can be found much earlier in the seventeenth-century, we feel that the publication of Locke's treatise On Government was as epochal as Calvin's Institutes or Hussey's Operations. See also Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity.

105. This should not be interpreted as suggesting that Hyper-Calvinism is as far removed from Calvin as Deism is. Rather, Hyperism is the equal opposite of, say, the Arminianism of Grotius or the early Whitby. Though there have been several varieties of Hyper-Calvinism since Hussey, the Hyperist system has continued to the present day basically intact. This was not the case with Deism. Fuller's Gospel Worthy did not kill Hyperism, while the works of Butler, Paley and Kant did much to strike blows to Deism which would eventually prove fatal. It would be difficult to trace Deism beyond the first quarter of the 1800's, when what remained in it merged into the rising Liberalism.

development of the 'Calvinist' side of the imbalance has consistently been the exact opposite - away from Low Calvinism and towards Hyper-Calvinism. The acceptance of free offer terminology, doctrine, and practice in the one and the rejection of them by the other illustrates this disjunction historically and with substantiation from the sources themselves.

Since the rejection of the free offer is probably the characteristic easiest to document and because it is also that which is the most prominent and definitive aspect of Hyper-Calvinism in relation to the other schools concerned, it is necessary for us to investigate the reasons why certain persons have rejected 'free offers' from a Calvinistic foundation.¹⁰⁶

106. Needless to say, some Hyper-Calvinists feel that there is obvious difficulty in basing the non-offer on Calvinism. At this point they often accuse pro-offer Calvinists of relying too much upon men such as Calvin while they themselves rest solely upon the Bible. Initially this is honest enough to admit that their much-treasured tradition is not as pure as they would like it to be, but this quickly turns to vilification. Of the offer question, Styles is at least consistent to represent this persuasion (cf. Guide, p.61). This means that a few Hypers consider the non-offer to be a relatively new doctrine so far as church history is concerned.

D. REASONS FOR REJECTING FREE OFFERS

Among the many reasons given for rejecting free offers, it is probably the doctrine of total depravity and inability which is most often given. This is pointed out by those describing Hyperism,¹ and the argument is regularly used by Hyper-Calvinists.² Even Pink employs it, though with reservations.³ High Calvinists, however, deny that the argument is valid. We can, they say, still give an offer to totally depraved men who are unable to receive it. Men are still responsible to receive it.⁴

1. See Clipsham, 'Fuller and Fullerism', p.102; Fuller, Works, pp.151, 163, 339; Orme, in Baxter, Works, vol.I, p.676; Hulse, Free Offer, pp.13-14; Taylor, Address, pp.15f.; Pink, Perseverance, p.66; Coppedge, pp.12-13; Nuttall, 'Northamptonshire', p.102; Oliver, 'Survey', p.8; Sheehan, 'Presentation', p.32; Engelsma, p.136; Cunningham, Historical Theology, vol.II, p.344; De Jong, pp.42ff., 48, 100; Thornton, pp.47-48.

2. E.g., Hussey, Operations, p.34 etc.; Button, Remarks, pp.55-56, 93, 96; Styles, Guide, p.66; Foreman, Remarks, pp.21, 25; Wells, Moral Government, p.8 and often; Johnson, The Election of God, pp.36-37; Martin, Thoughts, vol.I, pp.55-72, 101-106, 142-147; vol.III, pp.23-28, 64-87; Hazelton, Hold Fast, p.15; Stevens, Help, vol.I, pp.197-214; Palmer, Free Enquiry, pp.13, 104, 231-244; H.A. Long, Calvinism, p.54; J.A. Haldane, The Atonement, pp.174-175; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, pp.227, 229, 241; Wayman, Further Enquiry, pp.51-84 (but cf. pp.133-134); Engelsma, pp.2, 12, 13, 15, 16, 31, 36-39, 65, 69, 71, 136; Depoyster, Fragments, pp.90-116; Martin, The Faith Once Delivered, pp.5-6; Ramsay, Election, pp.204, 215; Gospel Standard Articles XXXIII and XXXIV (see our appendix). Often it is argued that free offers imply or are based upon free will: "the teaching of free will is necessarily implied in the doctrine of the offer and can be repudiated only by repudiating the offer itself" (Engelsma, p.36). Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.257. Herman Hoeksema said that if the Gospel were an offer, nobody would ever be saved, for no man has the ability to receive an offer (IK, vol.II, p.707). Homer Hoeksema felt that we must preach the responsibility to repent to all men, but to preach it in such a way that implies "the ability of natural man to repent" is but "mere moralism" (Voice, p.607. Cf. pp.585-586, 608). Wilks (p.58) agreed with the unbeliever who likened the Modern Calvinist (pro-offer) to the man who tied the four legs of his horse together then whipped it as punishment because it did not walk where he was directed to go. Presumably Wilks suggests that we just sit back and neither say anything to the horse nor untie him.

3. "To say salvation turns upon the sinner's own acceptance of Christ would be like offering a sum of money to a blind man upon the condition that he would see, or offering to ransom a prisoner on the proviso that he burst his way out of his steel-walled cell" (The Atonement, p.245. Cf. p.265). On the other hand, he castigates those who deny giving offers because of the doctrine that sinners are spiritually dead (John, vol.II, p.287; Perseverance, p.66). "If the ungodly are not pointedly and authoritatively called unto repentance of their sins and belief of the gospel, and if on the contrary they are only told that they are unable so to do, then they are encouraged in their impenitency and unbelief" (quoted in Iain Murray, Life of Pink, p.233). One or two other Hyper-Calvinists waver on the argument. Popham pictures a sinner crying out, "I can't believe"; to which Popham replies, "Poor sinner, try!" (Sermons, vol.II, p.227). But, of course, Hyper theology would tend to say that such a sinner is a 'sensible sinner' and is therefore already regenerated. Even so, Popham's generosity excels most here.

4. E.g., Iain Murray, The Forgotten Spurgeon, pp.7-8, 95; 'Free Offer and the Marrow', p.12; Fuller, Works, pp.171-173; John Bonar, 'Universal Calls', p.11; Boettner, Predestination, pp.282-286; Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, vol.II, p.557. Similarly, see Dell, Works, p.530; Beart, Truth Defended, Part II, pp.69-70, 75. Stonehouse felt that the controversy is not over the ability to believe (Fullerism Defended, pp.3, 5), while Abraham Taylor says that offers do not

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One question debated in this regard is this: is ability essential to responsibility? Does inability negate responsibility? One often finds High Calvinists claiming that Arminians and Hyper-Calvinists have more in common with each other on this point than either have in common with High Calvinists. It is claimed that Arminians assert that all men are responsible, therefore all men are able; and that Hyper-Calvinists hold that all men are unable, therefore all men are not responsible. According to many High Calvinists, both of these two groups are in error while High Calvinism remains alone in the truth that inability does not negate responsibility.⁵ Is this a correct estimation of the three schools? We do not feel it is entirely accurate.

Alverey Jackson (a High Calvinist) compared the offer question with the Law. God commands all men to obey; while no man can obey, all men are still responsible to obey. Similarly, argued Jackson, God commands men to believe and repent and He offers them grace; no man can believe or repent or receive the offer but they are still responsible to do so.⁶ Now Gill agreed that men are unable to keep the Law but are responsible to do so, for the Law only shows "what a man ought to do, not what he can do".⁷ Also, "though man by sin has lost his power to comply with the will of God by an obedience to it; God has not lost his power, right and authority to command".⁸ As regards the Law, then,

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always presuppose the ability to receive them (Address, pp.14-15).

5. See Pink, Gleanings From the Scriptures, pp.277-278; Honeysett, Unbelievers, p.9; William Young, in Encyclopaedia of Christianity, vol.I, p.278; Engelsma, p.16; Kevan, p.151; Macleod, Scottish Theology, p.141; Iain Murray, The Forgotten Spurgeon, pp.7-8, 95, 99-100; Custance, The Sovereignty of Grace, p.117. For representative Reformed positions, cf. Proctor, p.108; Dell, Works, p.530; Bellamy, True Religion, pp.272-275; Ben Warburton, Calvinism, pp.142-148.

6. The Question Answered, pp.8, 44.

7. Cause, p.25. Cf. Comm on Acts 17:30; Seymour, pp.131-135. Wayman held that it is wrong "To assert the law requires of man more than God enables him to perform" (Further Enquiry, p.52). Parks states that "A conditional assertion or observation asserts nothing. It by no means follows that because God commands, or because God proposes, man is able to obey or to do", and quotes Luther as follows: "God's ifs and imperative moods ... are intended to declare what ought to be done, rather than what men have in their power to do" (Five Points, pp.67, 80. Cf. pp.69-70).

8. Body, p.540. So too John Gadsby, Letter to Aikman, p.26; Popham, Sermons, vol.II, p.61; Brine, Vindication, pp.126, 139-141, 146, 177; Pink, Gleanings From the Scriptures, p.86; Sovereignty, p.192; Atkinson, Faith, p.82. Colyer accepts that this dictum is correct with regard to the Law but feels that it does not apply to the question of Duty-Faith (Good News, p.158). Gadsby uses the same argument, adding the 'Adamic argument', for which see below (Works, vol.II, p.200).

Gill certainly did not hold that inability negated or lessened in any way man's responsibility. As for the Gospel, offers are futile but man is still responsible to believe certain things. His inability to come to Christ is due solely to his own sinful desires, not to any positive decree of God; therefore not coming to Christ is still blameworthy and criminal - hence inability does not negate responsibility.⁹

Part of the problem is that of the question of sufficient grace. Arminians admit that all men are depraved but affirm that God gives sufficient grace to them in order to maintain their responsibility. This sufficient grace is said to come either through nature or through the Gospel and enables men to believe. High Calvinists reject this theory. Their view is usually that there is indeed a common or universal grace given through nature, perhaps even compounded through the Gospel, and all men are responsible to obey God and believe the Gospel when confronted with it. But they deny that this includes sufficient grace which enables men to believe the Gospel or obey the Law. The only grace that is sufficient for these duties is special grace and that is given through the Gospel. Hyper-Calvinists like Gill agree with this.¹⁰ Some Federalists hold that special, sufficient grace is offered,¹¹ but others add that the offer is never taken, for no man can receive anything from God without this grace enabling him to do so. Is there any difference, then?

9. Cause, p.33. Cf. S & T¹, vol.II, p.146; Body, p.539. Arguing from various premisses, many Hyper-Calvinists have agreed that inability does not negate responsibility. See the following: Burn, The Great Religious Question, p.85; Bentley, Helper, p.58; Pittman, Questions, p.56; Popham, Sermons, vol.II, p.61; Parks, Tracts and Addresses, p.207; Huntington, Works, vol.VII, pp.331, 340; Engelsma, p.16; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.466; Herman Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, pp.201-210; vol.III, p.5. Pink repeatedly makes this assertion: Interpretation, p.54; Sovereignty, pp.185-192; Sanctification, pp.51-52; Gleanings From the Scriptures, pp.85-86, 282, 299, 304, 309; John, vol.II, pp.49-50; Belcher, Born to Write, pp.60-62; Murray, Life of Pink, p.237. Pink called impotence and accountability a "seeming paradox (Revelation, p.145), and thought that "The basis or ground of human responsibility is human ability ... the possession of rationality plus the gift of conscience" (Sovereignty, pp.190-192). Moreover, "that God commandeth all men everywhere to repent argues the universality of creature responsibility" (ibid., p.127); thus, it refers to the Gospel as well as to the Law.

10. Cf. Body, p.551; Comm on II Cor. 6:2. Hanks rejects the distinction between total and absolute depravity. This viewpoint, he says, holds that there are remnants via common grace which allow for the ability of accepting the Gospel offer. But Hanks rejects common (and sufficient) grace and offers. See Hanks et al, p.17; and Chapter XI below.

11. For example, Alleine: "God offers all needed grace to enable you" to repent and believe. (Alarm to the Unconverted, pp.139-140).

There are some seemingly conflicting statements in this concern from Hyper-Calvinists. Skepp rejected the notion of the free offer but stated that "God, in the Gospel, requires no more of man than he is able, if he will but put forth himself in an earnest and sincere manner, to perform".¹² Gill would agree, for both say that man will never believe unless and until faith is given. The vital word in the above quote is 'if'. Ability is related to action; inaction means inability. They could not simply state the first clause of the statement without qualifying it with the second (subordinate) clause. Even so, Skepp here shows more liberality than most Hyper-Calvinists, as often in his book.

Related to this is the matter of faith as a 'duty', a word which Hyper-Calvinists usually reject in this regard.¹³ The Puritan Federalists

12. Divine Energy, p.59. Brine: "God would never require more of his Creature man, than he was furnished with a power to do, as he was created by him" (Vindication, p.208. Cf. p.213). But this was before the Fall. Warburton: "He does not require (prayer) out of that from which it is impossible to bring it" (Gospel, p.132). On the universal responsibility of prayer and its relation to divine sovereignty, see Chapters III and X. Part of the problem here concerns the nature of Creature responsibility and sinful inability. Fuller stressed the difference between natural and moral inability. According to this viewpoint, sinful Man is naturally able to obey and believe but he is not morally able. This was questioned by Button, but other Hyper-Calvinists have tended towards accepting it without coming to Fuller's conclusions as they apply to Duty-Faith. See Martin, Thoughts, vol.III, pp.64-87; Huntington, Works, vol.XI, pp.157-158; Stevens, Memoirs, pp.17-18. Some Arminians rejected the distinction (cf. Dan Taylor, Observations on Fuller). Pink acknowledges a debt to Fuller on the theory and said that human responsibility depends upon the difference between the two sides. Thus, inability is voluntary - it is a 'will not', not a 'cannot', so far as the human side is concerned. This means that Man's moral inability only compounds, not negates, his accountability and increases his guilt. See Sovereignty, pp.187-197. On obligation and duty with respect to responsibility, see Stevens, Help, vol.I, p.199; Palmer, Plain Statement, pp.24-26. But the issue does not end here, for Hyper-Calvinists feel that men are not held morally responsible to do anything spiritual per se. That is, the Gospel requires only natural faith, not moral faith as such; men are able to have the former but not the latter. See Wells, Moral Government, pp.41, 77. While accepting that "creature inability in no wise diminishes creature obligation", Styles added that the real question was about duty (Manual, p.209), not responsibility (p.203). Accountability is not the same as responsibility: the former is determined by the Moral Law and the natural endowments all men possess, whereas responsibility assumes that the human will is consulted and that special obligations have already been agreed upon by Man. Hence, all men have accountability by Nature and the Law, but only Christians have responsibility through the Spirit and the Gospel (p.203). In a sense, Styles is quibbling over terms, as he is but saying that responsibility belongs to the realm of sanctification rather than justification. Even Styles accepts a version of the differentiation of natural and moral inability. See Guide, p.57. Note that Popham prefers to speak of 'accountability' rather than 'responsibility', a preference similar to the position of Wells and Styles (Counsel, p.53). See Chapter III above.

13. Pink: "It is not too much to say that they seem to be afraid of the very word 'duty' (Gleanings from the Scriptures, p.278). On the definition of 'Duty-Faith', see Styles, Guide, pp.78, 251; Gospel Standard Article XXVI; and Chapter VII above. Colyer called Duty-Faith "a non-entity" (Good News, p.104). Burn, who wavered on the question, felt that "Duty does not imply, as many suppose, ability to do, but a right and obligation" (The Great Religious Question, p.5). Some of the lower Hyper-Calvinists claim to accept Duty-Faith while rejecting free

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(e.g. Flavel¹⁴) often spoke of faith as a duty. Keach represents them in pure Augustinian fashion: "To believe is our Duty, but 'tis Christ that gives us grace and power so to do".¹⁵ Hyper-Calvinists deny Duty-Faith in varying degrees and for differing reasons.¹⁶ In the nineteenth century Gadsby led the fight against the concept of 'Duty-Faith'. His main argument was that "if the faith of God's elect is a duty required by the law of works, then real faith in Christ must be a work of the law ... then God's people are saved by the works of the law".¹⁷ For Gadsby, whatever is commanded is of the law of works (i.e., a Covenant of Works); whatever is a duty is a command; therefore whatever is a duty is part of the law of works. One is saved by the Covenant of Grace not the Covenant of Works; therefore the Covenant of Grace has no commands and no duties.

High Calvinists would disagree by pointing to the Gospel as the 'law of faith'. That is, the Covenant of Grace commands faith, and therefore faith is a duty. Gill offers this explanation:

... as the law is not of faith, so faith is not of the law.
There is a faith indeed which the law requires and obliges

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offers (e.g., Engelsma, p.17). Even Styles could agree that all men have the duty to believe the report of the Gospel in one sense. What is at stake is the duty to believe savingly. Pink sometimes accepts Duty-Faith (e.g., The Atonement, p.281), and Cozens appears to have wavered on the matter (cf. A Christmas Box, pp.110-113). Duty-Faith is intrinsically associated with the free offer. J.C. Ryland, Jr.: "If it be the duty of all men when the Gospel comes to believe unto salvation, then it is the duty of those who are entrusted with the Gospel to endeavour to make it known among all nations for the obedience of faith" (in Culross, The Three Rylands, p.79). If all sinners do not have the duty to believe, argued Abraham Taylor, then ministers do not have the duty to exhort them to believe (Address, p.2). Most accept that faith matches the content of the Gospel; hence, the controversy over 'Duty-Faith' matches that of the 'Free Offer'.

14. Works, vol.VI, p.260.

15. Display, p.163.

16. Foreman called Duty-Faith "modern Pharisaism" and argued that there are no examples of it in the Bible, especially in the Gospels and Acts (Remarks on Duty Faith, pp.24, 45-52). Atkinson contended that duty and faith were mutually incompatible as to their objects - if something is by faith, it is not a duty: if a duty, not by faith (Faith, p.32). Colyer said that sinners no more have the duty to believe savingly before rebirth than a man has the duty to exist before his natural birth; moreover, Duty-Faith is as impossible as insisting that "unmarried persons have legitimate issue while they are in an unmarried state" (Good News, pp.157, 159).

17. Works, vol.I, p.261. So too Atkinson, Faith, p.153; R.G. Martin, The Faith Once Delivered, p.6; and, similarly, Styles, Manual, p.205; Stevens, Help, vol.II, pp.4-7. Foreman adds that Duty-Faith is a doctrine of neither the Law nor the Gospel, but "a muddling denial of the true spirit of both, agreeing with neither" (Remarks on Duty Faith, pp.11-13, 20).

to, namely faith and trust in God, as the God of nature and providence ... but as for special faith in Christ as a Saviour or a believing in him to the saving of the soul, this the law knows nothing of, nor does it make it known; this kind of faith neither comes by the administration of it, nor does it direct to Christ the object of it, nor give any encouragement to believe in him.¹⁸

Both Gadsby and High Calvinists agree with this. Jackson said that they argued, "Adam had not faith in Christ, nor was obliged to have it before the fall; and neither did, nor could lose it, either for himself, or for his offspring; and therefore none of his fallen posterity are obliged to believe in Christ".¹⁹ The key is, as Gill often put it, "the obligation to believe in Christ, and so the faith to which men are obliged, are in proportion, and according to the revelation of the Gospel, which obliges them".²⁰ And most Calvinists would generally agree with this.

As we said earlier, part of the problem concerns faith as a gift. If saving faith is a gift, how can it be a duty?²¹ Ness, for example, maintained that "What is God's, as a gift to bestow, cannot be man's duty to perform as a condition of salvation".²² One might respond that

18. Body, p.376. 'Obliged' here seems to mean 'duty'. Cf. also Comm on Gal. 3:12. On this argument, see Styles, Manual, pp.20, 186; Foreman, Remarks on Duty Faith, p.55; Button, Remarks, p.25. Gadsby argued that since the Gospel is not one's 'rule of life' until he believes, unbelievers are not under it; and therefore there is no such thing as Duty-Faith (Works, vol.I, p.252). See Chapter X below.

19. Jackson, Question, pp.48-49. (Observe the use of the word 'oblige'.) Parks noted that there was a conditional offer of life before, but not since, the Fall (Resisting the Spirit). On the 'Adamic argument', see Foreman, Remarks on Duty Faith, pp.52-53; Stevens, Help, vol.I, pp.104-137, 150, etc.; Styles, Manual, pp.210-211; Brine, Refutation of Arminian Principles, p.5; Pink, Sovereignty, pp.303-310; Stonehouse, Fullerism Defended, pp.22-24; Button, Remarks, p.91; Ladson, A Ram's Horn; Wayman, Further Enquiry, pp.51-84.

20. Cause, p.31. Cf. Wells, Moral Government, pp.16-17, 21; and Section E below.

21. Harrison, p.22. On the 'faith-gift' argument, see Brine, Mistakes, pp.34-36; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.531-535; Huntington, Works, vol.XI, p.148; Palmer, Enquiry, p.74; John Gadsby, Letter to Aikman, p.26.

22. Ness, p.52. Thus, salvation and grace (etc.) are given, not offered. See Oliver, 'Survey', p.10; Hazelton, Hold Fast, p.15; M'Culla, Defence of Calvinism, p.70; Stevens, Help, vol.I, p.58; Wells, Letters to Theophilus, vol.II, p.221; Moral Government, p.52; Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.195; Depoyster, Fragments, pp.95, 102; Palmer, Enquiry, pp.52-53; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.479, 509; Pink, The Atonement, p.246; Objections to Sovereignty, pp.6-7; Godhead, p.90; and especially Sovereignty, pp.250-251. H.A. Long: "Remember God is a despot. Now despots give, not offer, because the latter compliments the presentee, which the holy God could not do to a sinful man" (Calvinism, p.88. Cf. pp.51, 181, and Chapter III above). Critics feel that this implies that despots do not love sinful men, and Long agrees - God loves only 'sensible sinners' (see below and Chapter XI). Burns: "it is no man's duty to have what God sovereignly ... Cont'd:

obedience to the Law is also a gift but still a duty, but again the reply is that there is a difference between Law and Gospel. The debate, then, concerns the differences between Law and Gospel.

All admit that the Law is conditional. They differ as to 'conditions' in the Gospel. Gill vigorously asserts that the Gospel is unconditional; offers are conditional; therefore the Gospel has no offers.²³ Keach said that the Gospel "doth not proclaim a conditional peace".²⁴ High Calvinists usually agree that the Gospel is unconditional but have difficulty distinguishing condition and duty. Hussey rejected duty-faith as legalistic and thereby rejected offer theology: "offers are legal; and is legal preaching good news?"²⁵ Arminians reply that the non-offer Gospel is not good news to anyone until he believes.²⁶

Fuller claimed that the Gospel requires obedience even though, strictly speaking, it is not a law. Disobeying and disbelieving the Gospel is a heinous sin.²⁷ Jackson also contended that if saving faith is not a duty, then lack of it is not a sin.²⁸ Since unbelief is a sin, faith is a duty. Hyper-Calvinists again reply that this argument is based on the faulty supposition that the Gospel is a law. To make the Gospel a law is Neonomianism.²⁹ Furthermore, Hyper-Calvinists usually agree that unbelief of the Gospel is a terrible sin. Saving faith,

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bestows" (Preach, p.2). Pink contrasts the Holy Spirit's "giving" and "offering" (Practical, p.70); and also "invitation" and "actual bestowment" (Election and Justification, p.99). Stevens relates it to preaching: "a minister of Christ is a preacher of gifts, but not of offers" (Help, vol.II, p.125). Hoeksema: "we would repudiate the illustration of faith as the hand whereby we receive the proffered salvation", for man has nothing whereby to receive, and salvation is not a gift which can be refused (IX, vol.II, p.349). But cf. Sarrells, p.388.

23. Cause, p.184; S & T¹, vol.II, pp.146-147. So, more or less, Parks, Five Points, p.63; Hoeksema, The Gospel, p.14; Dogmatics, pp.283, 485, 509; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.355-356; Engelsma, pp.37-38, 80. Cf. De Jong, p.37. Mason argued against Tisse that to offer something upon a condition which Man cannot meet, as Tisse affirmed, is not to offer it at all but merely to make mockery of Man (Tisse, Riches, Part II, p.163). See below.

24. Display, p.154.

25. Operations, p.313.

26. E.g., Bourn, op. cit., p.67. Cf. Barclay, Apology, p.83.

27. Works, pp.157-167. See Section E below.

28. Jackson, Question, p.47. Cf. Cozens, A Christmas Box, p.110. Johnson queried whether it is in fact a sin to reject the Gospel according to the manner and argument of those such as Jackson (Faith, pp.54-56).

29. On Neonomianism, see Chapters VI and XII.

however, is more than just faith in the Gospel. Fuller then asked whether non-saving faith is moral or merely a faith of assent. If it be only the latter, as he felt that Hyper-Calvinists maintained, "how can it be the object of command? How can it be a duty?"³⁰ The reply was that non-saving faith was mainly that of assent but, being commanded, it was also moral. To some observers, these two positions are complementary, not contradictory.

Hyper-Calvinists equate duty with law, whereas High Calvinists prefer to speak of duty as responsibility. Both admit that there is responsibility (or accountability) in both Law and Gospel, but the former deny that there is duty in the Gospel. For them, in the Law responsibility is duty but in the Gospel responsibility is obligation but not duty. High Calvinists cannot see the differences between obligation and duty. Now all hold that all men are obliged to believe the Gospel. Arminians contend that the two Calvinist positions are the same and incorrect, except that the Hyper-Calvinist is more consistent. Both say all are obliged to have faith but the average Federalist says that men are obliged to have special faith in addition. He says that what is a gift is also a duty. One might ask how this is possible. Is a man duty-bound to ask for the gift of faith? But if he does not ask with faith he will receive nothing. And we are again back where we started. No man believes unless it is given to him to believe, and that is the gift of special grace not common grace.

Hussey accepted a doctrine of common grace but denied that this was sufficient for faith. Thus, offers are futile and misleading: "You do no more than preach a universal grace, while you offer Christ to all sinners... Special grace cannot be offered".³¹ Special grace is not universal, not can it be offered. Others agree.³² High Calvinists are sometimes cited for inconsistency on this point,³³ in holding that the doctrine of special grace does not negate the free offer.³⁴ Both schools

30. Quoted in Underwood, p.191.

31. Operations, pp.200-201. Cf. Glory, p.545.

32. Engelsma: "the doctrine of the offer denies the sovereignty of grace" (p.37. Cf. p.17). Hoeksema said that the offer was based upon the erroneous doctrine of common grace, whereas one needed to know that God loves oneself in particular (cf. IK, vol.I, p.324; Dogmatics, p.490; Engelsma, pp.27, 31; De Jong, p.35). See also Ramsay, Election, p.205; Pink, Election and Justification, p.171.

33. Cf. De Jong, p.35.

accepted that special grace is irresistible. Hypers contended that this itself negated the offer doctrine.³⁵ Furthermore, since special grace is distinguishing, we cannot preach that God loves all men. Offers imply that God loves all men in a way of special grace, therefore offers are deceitful and misrepresent God.³⁶ Special grace belongs to the realm of election. Some feel that the Hyper-Calvinists were merely being consistent with their doctrine of grace in refusing to offer grace.³⁷

Others prefer to root the non-offer in the Supralapsarian doctrine of reprobation and the secret will of God.³⁸ High Calvinists, who are usually Sublapsarian, deny that the doctrines of the secret will and reprobation negate the offer practice.³⁹ Rather, they argue that the doctrine of election is the great incentive to evangelism.⁴⁰ But Hyper-

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34. E.g., John Murray, Works, vol.I, p.81.

35. Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, pp.229, 242; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.617-618; Engelsma, pp.2, 15, 34, 37, 71, 136. Cf. Toon, HC, pp.79-80.

36. Hussey, Operations, p.202. Styles: "Duty Faith (is) an insolent slander upon the grace of God" (Guide, p.38).

37. Further discussion regarding grace and the free offer will be found in Chapter XI, Section E below.

38. See Toon, HC, p.82; 'Supralapsarian Christiology', p.25; De Jong, pp.45-47, 68, 113ff.; John Murray, Works, vol.I, p.81; Robison, 'Legacy', p.117; Nuttall, 'Calvinism in Free Church History', p.422; Taylor, Address, pp.15ff.; Thornton, p.94; Wilson, vol.IV, p.222; (Anonymous) 'A Sufferer for Truth', p.15; Fuller, Works, p.345; Coppedge, pp.12-13, 82. For the Hyperist use of the argument, see Hussey, Operations, pp.34, 42-43; Glory, p.545; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.71; Stevens, Help, vol.I, p.87; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.238. Wayman evidently was thinking of the doctrine of reprobation when he argued that ministers should not offer to those who may not have a right to what is offered (Further Enquiry, p.50). Engelsma thinks that those teaching a well-meant offer inevitably reject the doctrine of reprobation, though he denies that it is only the Supralapsarian view of reprobation that rules out the offer practice. The question of Supra or Infra has "absolutely no bearing on the issue of the offer" (pp.42-45).

39. E.g., John Murray, Works, vol.I, p.81; Boettner, Predestination, pp.282-286; Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, vol.II, p.557; Spurgeon, in Thornton, pp.83-85. So too lower Calvinists: Bunyan, Works, vol.II, pp.348-352; Beart, Truth Defended, Part II, pp.56-58. Whitefield: "Though I hold particular election, yet I offer Jesus freely to every individual soul" (Works, vol.I, p.331). Whitefield may well have been thinking of those such as Gill and Brine.

40. This is the proposition of (High) Calvinist books such as J.I. Packer, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God; R.B. Kuiper, God-Centered Evangelism; Walter Shepard, Sent by the Sovereign. Parks: "We may be certain that wherever the pure Gospel is preached, there are some to be gathered in by it" (Five Points, p.33). Cf. Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.154-155. And yet, as illustrated in the case of the senior Ryland, Hyperists tend to use this as an excuse for not actively supporting foreign missions. See Section E below. Engelsma feels that it is the doctrine of election, not the error of common grace, that inspires missions (pp.55-58, 123).

Calvinists often agree that the doctrine of election spurs evangelism on and even contend that election should be preached in evangelism.⁴¹ Election, however, cannot be offered; men are already either elect or reprobate. And since God already knows who will and who will not believe the Gospel, He does not offer salvation.⁴² More importantly, God has already willed who will and who will not believe. This is the secret will and is spoken about in the Gospel. Some High Calvinists hold that the Gospel concerns only the revealed will, but often add that the Gospel includes election and so says at least something about the secret will.⁴³ The two positions are virtually the same here. Because of the Hyper-Calvinist over-emphasis on the secret will, that will receives much attention in the Gospel and therefore minimizes the possibility of offers. For this reason Toon says that Hyper-Calvinists deny offer theology because they did not distinguish between the two wills.⁴⁴

Both parties agree that God does not intend to save all. This means that we cannot preach so as to imply that He intends to save all men.⁴⁵ If we preached that, then our preaching would be in vain; for if God intends to save all then all will be saved, so why preach? Hussey then argues that offers imply that the Lord intends to save all to whom grace is offered. "In a word, the Lord never offers saving grace to those whom he never intends to save, because he cannot act deceitfully".⁴⁶

41. Cf. Cause, pp.158-159.

42. On the argument from election, see Hussey, Operations, p.283; Glory, p.545; Foreman, Remarks on Duty Faith, pp.20-21. Palmer felt that offers presuppose that men first choose God, then God chooses them (Enquiry, p.14). Engelsma: "Defense of the doctrine of election demands that the well-meant offer be condemned" (p.23. Cf. also pp.2, 15, 17, 34, 71, 136). Stevens: "If salvation be impossible, an offer goes too far; if it be sure, it does not go far enough. An offer leaves salvation to the sinner's choice; when, in fact, it is determined by the choice of God" (Pastoral Letter, p.30. Cf. Help, vol.I, p.87). Gadsby was of the mind that offers imply that salvation is precarious (Works, vol.I, pp.258, 263). On the Low Calvinist view of why God commands offers to be made even to those whom He knew would not believe, see Watts, Works, vol.VI, pp.294-295; Bellamy, True Religion, p.340. Many Lows reject the High and Hyper views of reprobation and prefer to posit that while election is unconditional and belongs entirely to God, reprobation is conditional and belongs entirely to Man. Sell feels that this was Calvin's view (The Great Debate, p.82). Accordingly, they defend free offers in a way that does justice to both election and reprobation, sovereignty and responsibility.

43. Cf. Murray and Stonehouse, p.3.

44. HC, p.130.

45. E.g., Iain Murray, 'Free Offer and the Marrow', p.12; Gill, S & T, vol.II, p.146; Stebbins, pp.13-47.

46. Hussey, Operations, p.202. Cf. Hoeksema, Believers, p.126; Palmer, Enquiry, pp.14-15; Underwood, p.134.

Murray and Stonehouse correctly sum up the debate at this point: "It would appear that the real point in dispute in connection with the free offer of the gospel is whether it can properly be said that God desires the salvation of all men".⁴⁷ The words in dispute include desire, intend, wish, will and pleasure. Hyper-Calvinists usually prefer to use these only in relation to the secret will. To say that God desires all men to be saved is ambiguous; it implies universal salvation or an impotent God. God has not willed the salvation of all. Gill says:

... if it was the will of God that every individual of mankind should be saved, they would be saved; for 'who hath resisted his will?' ... but as it is certain in fact that all are not saved, it is as certain that it is not the will of God that every man and woman should be saved.⁴⁸

Both parties agree here, if we are speaking of the secret will. But Gill confuses the two: "It is not his will that all men, in this large sense, should be saved, unless there are two contrary wills in God".⁴⁹ As we saw earlier, Gill enveloped the revealed will in the secret will; the one was overshadowed by the other. He claims that the two are distinct yet he always submits the revealed to the secret. Even when men disobey the revealed will they are obeying the secret will. And High Calvinists are in agreement here as well. Both agree that, properly speaking, there is but one will of God. When preaching the Gospel, which is the revealed will, we should not speak in such a way as to suggest what is contrary to the secret will. Thus, both groups agree that in preaching we cannot say that it is really God's will that all men be saved. At best we can only speak hypothetically about the will for men to be saved. Gill said:

... nor is he to be charged for it with dissimulation and insincerity; since by it (the revealed will) he declares what is his good, perfect, and acceptable will, and what would be grateful and well-pleasing to him was it complied with and done.⁵⁰

47. Murray and Stonehouse, p.3. Cf. Iain Murray, 'Free Offer and the Marrow', p.14.

48. Body, p.470. So also Cause, pp.50, 159; Comm on II Peter 3:9.

49. Comm on I Tim 2:4. See Chapter III above.

50. Body, p.540 (emphasis mine). This is closely paralleled by Stebbins, Murray and Stonehouse.

Is the revealed will really sincere? Is it 'well-meant'?⁵¹ Is it 'serious'?⁵² Gill says yes but qualifies this with an hypothesis. God desires men to repent; he finds pleasure in their repenting; if they repent, it is evident that God was pleased to give them repentance. If they do not repent, it is because God was not pleased that they repent. Is this not conditional preaching, we ask? Gill would prefer to call it preaching in submission to the secret will of God. Such preachers must take great caution so as not to imply that God is actually intending all men's salvation.⁵³ Consequently, as De Jong says, they tend to sound "as if God does not will that his conditional offer be accepted".⁵⁴ Hyper-Calvinists take the same view with reference to acceptance of Gospel preaching.

Behind the rejection of the free offer doctrine lies an unflinching doctrine of the secret will and behind that a 'high' doctrine of God. As Hulse says, "The way in which the Gospel is preached will reveal the preacher's view of God's character and the nature of man".⁵⁵ Hulse contends that the free offer implies neither that God is unable to give without man's consent or that man is able to consent without the gift of faith.⁵⁶ Gadsby said that the free offer presented a contradiction here. It "represents both Christ and God the Father as poor disappointed beings, quite unable to subdue the heart of a poor dying worm. And what encouragement can there be in such a gospel as this, for any poor broken-hearted, self-despairing sinner in the world to trust in the Lord for salvation?"⁵⁷ Gill admits that his doctrine of God disallows the offer doctrine: "It is not consistent with our ideas of God, that he should send ministers to offer salvation to man, to whom he never intended to give it".⁵⁸ Hussey argued in a similar way: "offers exalt not the sovereignty of God (nor) God's supreme will".⁵⁹ They are

51. E.g., Stebbins, Christ Freely Offered; De Jong, p.45 and often.

52. E.g., Manton, Works, vol.III, pp.330-335; De Jong, pp.68, 113, etc.

53. Cf. De Jong, p.45.

54. De Jong, p.123. Cf. Engelsma, p.37.

55. Free Offer, p.4 (cf. p.15).

56. Free Offer, p.13.

57. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.256.

58. S & T¹, vol.II, p.146. Engelsma: "the offer of the gospel places a contradiction in God" (p.47).

59. Operations, p.51.

zealous (Arminians say over-zealous) to protect the sovereignty of God in its deterministic aspect at all costs, even at the expense of obliterating, or at least minimizing, human responsibility and the Gospel ministry. Arminians see this as making God a tyrant who demands men to make bricks without giving them straw and then condemns them for not making the bricks. God's holiness is compromised, say they.

The question of means enters in here. J.C. Ryland, Sr., in rebuking Carey, implied that God did not need or want men's assistance in converting the heathen. Men's efforts could only get in the way. One might point out a contradiction here. If God is such a sovereign, men's evangelistic efforts could not stand in the way whether they offered the Gospel or not. Furthermore, Ryland implied that God did not need any means, but Hyper-Calvinists admit that God always saves through certain means, like Christ, grace, the Gospel, faith, etc.⁶⁰ Some extremists, however, like the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Baptists feel that even preaching is unnecessary because God's elect have the seed of election, grace and regeneration biologically implanted in them. Gill, of course, rejected this. One might speculate whether paedo-Baptist Hyper-Calvinists like Hoeksema and Engelsma approached something similar in holding that some baptized children of believing parents are regenerated in infancy, producing infant faith that later comes to fruition via preaching. Hyper-Calvinist Baptists rejected this.⁶¹

Some feel that Gill rejected the offer doctrine because of his views on eternal justification before faith. Mayo, for example, asked, "If men are already justified, why preach?"⁶² But Gill did not teach actual, only virtual, justification before faith. He did not have substantial differences with the Puritan Federalists here. Moreover, he admitted that God generally uses the Gospel in pronouncing justification in foro conscientiae. What is more, said Gill, justification is pronounced, not offered.⁶³

Arminians disagree. They say that justification is offered and is

60. This raises special problems for the matter of mediate regeneration and those who have never heard the Gospel. See Section E below.

61. Cf. Torbert, p.262; Stebbins, p.113.

62. Mayo, pp.14, 65. Cf. Ivimey, vol.III, pp.272-273; Taylor, Address, p.35.

63. Cause, p.37. So too Stevens, Help, vol.I, p.87; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, p.242.

conditional on the acceptance of the guilty party. They base this on their view of the holiness and justice of God rather than on a deterministic view of sovereignty. Their jurisprudence is based on moral law;⁶⁴ hence the offer can be rejected, leaving the guilty party doubly guilty. Justification is not given automatically; it depends upon a proper response. High Calvinists reject this but disagree amongst themselves whether justification is offered or not. But all Hyper-Calvinists say that it is not.

Moving on, we find that Hyper-Calvinists assert that free offers are deceitful, abject, insincere, precarious, arrogant, impertinent, unnecessary, hypocritical, overly bold, and presumptuous.⁶⁵ They misrepresent God, take His name in vain and pervert the Gospel.⁶⁶ In one of his classical formulas Gill exclaimed, "How irrational it is, for ministers to stand offering Christ, and salvation by him to man, when, on the one hand, they have neither power nor right to give; and on the other hand, the persons they offer to, have neither power nor will to receive".⁶⁷ Ministers cannot forgive other men's sins. "The utmost the ministers of the gospel can do, is to declare, that whosoever believes in Christ, shall receive the remission of sins. To attempt more than this, is antichristian."⁶⁸ Hussey claimed that ministers who offer Christ

64. Classic statements of Arminian jurisprudence include Grotius, De Jure Belli Ac Pacis and De Veritate Religionis Christianae; Finney, Systematic Theology; and discussions in Richard Watson, Miley, Wiley, etc.

65. Hussey, Operations, pp.37-38, 51-52; Palmer, Erroneous Views, p.19; Gill, Preface to Davis, Hymns, p.V; Cause, p.156; Comm on II Cor. 1:19; Body, p.540; Bradbury, I Don't Like Calvinism, p.7; Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.200. Cf. Oliver, 'Survey', p.10; Nuttall, 'Calvinism in Free Church History', p.422; Harrison, p.16. Atkinson: "if an unbeliever practises those things that are specifically commanded to believers, he will add presumption to his unbelief" (Faith, p.52). Hence, Duty-Faith is presumptuous because only Christians have the duty, if the word is allowed, to believe. Similarly, Wells said that to believe in a way of Duty-Faith is to be "converted by and to a huge lie" (Letters to Theophilus, vol.II, p.219). And yet, as we shall see in Chapter X, Wells himself felt that there can be justification for telling lies for a good cause, even as it may belong to the pith of saving faith. Palmer held that offers are insincere, and if they were accepted, then the whole plan of redemption would be subverted (The Saviour and His People, p.35). As Hypers rebuke offerers as presumptuous for their views of the revealed will of God, so their critics accuse the Hypers of presumption for failure to give offers by prying into the secret will.

66. Hussey, Operations, pp.51-52. General invitations, said Styles, insult God (Guide, p.71).

67. S & T, vol.II, p.146. Cf. Body, p.539; Seymour, p.296; Harrison, p.16. So also Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.256-257; Hazelton, Sermons, p.10; Ramsay, Election, p.204. Irons: "nor will I offer to any man, even at the low priced bargain which is sometimes spoken of, what I have no power to sell and he none to purchase" (Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.41). Hussey: "To offer God's grace is to steal: God saith, Thou shalt not steal" (quoted in Toon, HC, p.81). Palmer rejected offers because they imply that God's power is at our command (Enquiry, p.16).

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are claiming to be greater than Christ, Who Himself does not offer.⁶⁹ We must therefore simply preach and leave the application to the Spirit.⁷⁰ As for the listener, he must be humble and wait for the Spirit to work in him, as Philpot remarked:

If the will of God be so, it is better to be poor, condemned criminals at the ends of the earth, waiting in humility for a smile, pleading in sincerity for a promise, than rush presumptuously on, and claim his gifts as our right and due.⁷¹

On this High Calvinists claim to differ. They say that it is not presumptuous of them to offer the Gospel and grace and Christ. But then, in fact, they do not really differentiate preaching and offering. As for the listeners, they say that "it is true humility of heart to take what Christ offers you".⁷² Some Hyper-Calvinists imply that it is more humble not to believe but simply to wait for the gift of faith, but others openly state that true humility exercises itself in faith and repentance. So in fact there is really no difference between the two schools on this point.

A few comments on exclusivism may be appropriate here. Both parties are exclusive in some things, such as church membership and the Lord's Table. Both are for believers only.⁷³ Gill adds baptism to the list. It is possible that the Hyper-Calvinists were so involved in defending the

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68. S & T, vol.III, p.139.

69. Operations, pp.273-274.

70. Operations, pp.273-274; Glory, p.647; Gill, Body, p.539; Comm on Acts 5:20. Cf. Oliver, 'Survey', p.10. Offers dishonour the person and work of the Holy Spirit says Styles, Manual, p.205; Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, p.145. Pink denies that the work of the Spirit "is nothing more than an 'offer' of the Gospel which sinners may accept or reject as they please" (The Atonement, p.121).

71. Sermons, vol.IX, p.57; Gospel Pulpit, vol.VII, p.193. Styles, attacked Fullerism and Arminianism in a similar manner: "It were better to suffer our fellow-sinners to remain as they are than to urge them by spurious Faith to obtain a worthless religion" (Guide, p.235). Cf. Gill, Body, p.934; Eaton, Honeycombe, pp.149-150. See Chapter VII, Section B above.

72. Marrow of Modern Divinity, p.139. H.A. Long agreed that it is not presumptuous to believe the truth, but he continued to reject free offers because they call upon men to believe a lie. See Calvinism Popularized, p.181.

73. E.g., Comm on Lev. 22:11; Body, p.890. Hoeksema: "There is neither in baptism nor in holy communion a general offer of grace" (Believers, p.140). On Hoeksema's view of the relationship between the family covenant, baptism and the theory of free offer, see Believers, pp.20-33; and Chapter V, Section I above.

Gospel against Deism, Socinianism and Arminianism that they ended up 'fencing' the Gospel and Cross. Robison says that they were afraid that the unbelieving would join the visible church.⁷⁴ "The natural result", he says, "was that very few people were brought into the local churches, save the children of those already members. Such a closed society incurred the suspicion of the rest of the community, thereby further discouraging any desire among outsiders to join".⁷⁵ Spurgeon once remarked that "Some people seem to be afraid lest we should be the means of saving some of the non-elect".⁷⁶

Gill himself admits to a degree of exclusivism in his preaching. Pastors should not feed dogs that worry the flock of God:

The children's bread, that which is fit and suitable food for them, is not to be taken and cast to dogs; that which is holy is not to be given to them; the holy word of God, its precious truths and promises, do not belong to them.

... the doctrine of peace, pardon, atonement, and satisfaction for sin, is only to be preached as belonging to such that truly repent of sin, and believe in Christ ... to do otherwise would be to cast pearls before swine, and give that which is holy to dogs.⁷⁷

Gill does not say that preachers are to say nothing to unbelievers. Rather, he says that we must be careful to apply truth properly. Applications for believers are not made to unbelievers. Peace and pardon do not belong to unbelievers as unbelievers but to believers as believers. This applies to the atonement as well: Christ died for believers as elect, not for unbelievers as non-elect. In short, the blessings of the Gospel belong only to those who receive them. In his comments on Matt. 7:6 Gill denies that the two prohibitions about dogs and swine refer to preaching to unbelievers, in this sense:

... the phrase ... is generally understood of not delivering or communicating the holy word of God and the truths of

74. Robison, Particular Baptists, p.iii, 15.

75. Robison, 'Legacy', p.117.

76. Quoted in Thornton, p.72. Engelsma: "lest it should call a reprobate, hyper-Calvinism tends to call no one" (p.19). Gawthorn thought that a doctrinal Antinomians (i.e. Gospel Standard Baptists and Huntingtonians) were fearful lest too many sinners be saved (cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.262-263).

77. Body, p.870; Comm on Ezek. 46:20.

the Gospel, comparable to pearls, or the ordinances of it, to persons notoriously vile and sinful: to men, who being violent and furious persecutors, and impudent blasphemers, are compared to dogs; or to such, who are scandalously vile, impure in their lives and conversations, and are therefore compared to swine ... But since the subject Christ is upon is reproof, it seems rather to be the design of the expressions, that men should be cautious, and prudent, in rebuking and admonishing such persons for their sins, in whom there is no appearance or hope of success; yea, where there is danger of sustaining loss.⁷⁸

Furthermore, Gill denies that the prohibition means that we cannot preach to unbelievers at all. He does deny, however, that we should continue to preach to those who do not respond in faith:

... it is but casting pearls before swine, and giving that which is holy to dogs, to reprove and exhort such persons; though the Gospel is to be preached to every creature, yet when men despise it, and make a mock at it, they are to be turned from, and no more is to be said to them.⁷⁹

One sometimes hears the High Calvinist charge that Hyper-Calvinists do not preach to unbelievers at all because they fear casting pearls before swine. But we think that we have shown that John Gill, at least, did not teach this. He referred the prohibition to continued preaching to patent unbelievers. Such would be a waste of time. Many High Calvinists have accepted this principle, as well as numerous Arminians.

On the other hand, we also read where Hyper-Calvinists employ the 'pearls before swine' argument to deny offers and indiscriminate invitations. This applies to several other arguments, such as those concerning grace, mourning, and especially limited atonement.⁸⁰ One

78. Comm on Matt. 7:6.

79. Comm on Pro. 9:7. Cf. on Matt. 10:14.

80. Pink expressly states that it is casting pearls before swine to preach "God loves you and Christ died for you" to all men indiscriminately, for "The fact is, the love of God is a truth for the saints only, and to present it to the enemies of God is to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs" (Objections to Sovereignty, p.3; Sovereignty, p.246; Present Day Evangelism, p.7. Cf. Sermon on the Mount, pp.288-294). Opponents observe that in Matt. 15:26 Christ Himself gave the children's bread to a Gentile dog - for Christ is Himself the Bread of Life and gave His life for His enemies, and we are all His enemies by nature. Supralapsarians, however, deny that the elect are Christ's enemies, nor have they ever been so except in an informal sense (see Chapter XI). Pink also argued that "to present Christ to those who have never been shown their need of Him, seems to us to be guilty of casting pearls before swine" (Sovereignty, p.247). As we shall see in Section F below, this argument is based upon the notion that those who see their need of Christ are 'sensible sinners' and therefore are regenerate.

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believing in limited atonement would be inconsistent to say that Christ loves and died for unbelievers. (This would be giving the elect children's bread to the reprobate dogs and casting pearls before swine.) But as we shall see in the next chapter, this was the view of High Calvinists as well – but not Low Calvinists. Our study here aims to indicate on what points the various schools disagree and on which points they agree. Suffice it here to mention that Low and Hyper-Calvinists contend that the free offer practice implies a universal atonement; while Highs see no inconsistency on this point, though Lows accuse them of employing the 'pearls' argument because they too accept limited atonement.

A few of the lesser reasons for rejection of the offer doctrine may be mentioned. One curious reason was given by Hussey in an isolated and relatively unexplained place: "It is improper for us in the ministry to say now unto sinners ... they must come to Christ" for the simple reason that Christ is not now on earth but in His exalted state in heaven.⁸¹ But this a mere jangling about words; the free offer proponents say that we come to Christ spiritually and by faith. Another pedantic argument was Gill's: "An idle thing it is, to talk of the universality of the offers of the gospel, when the gospel is not preached to the tenth part of the world, nor anything like it".⁸² All (except

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Hence, it is casting pearls before swine to invite all men indiscriminately, for not all men are 'sensible sinners' (Godhead, p.202). Other Hyper-Calvinists have felt that free offers constitute casting pearls before swine. See Palmer, Enquiry, pp.32, 121-124; Ramsay, Election, p.232; Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.III, pp.421-422; Wilks, p.363; Hussey, Glory, pp.588-589; Kershaw, Autobiography, p.158; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.260. Lows counter that there is a sense in which unbelievers can be called dogs but they feel that Matt. 7:6 means that we are not to continue to preach where there is no apparent possibility of success. Some Lows chide Hypers for looking down on unbelievers and the reprobate in a Pharisaical holier-than-thou manner, preferring not to soil themselves by contact with unbelieving dogs.

81. Operations, p.396.

82. S & T, vol.II, p.152. Palmer reduces the proportion to "one twentieth part" but otherwise employs the same argument (Enquiry, pp.69-70). The same basic argument has been put forward in various ways by J.A. Haldane, The Atonement, p.103; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.131-133, 352-354, 478-480; and, with regard to preaching, even William Perkins, Works, vol.I, p.111. In what may be an echo of the senior Ryland's sentiments against Carey, Gosden feels that it is "significant" that the Apostles were sometimes forbidden to preach in certain places (Baptism, p.8). Some critics sense a tendency in the direction of racism in those of extreme Calvinistic persuasions with reference to foreign missions. Recently John Kent has put forth this analysis: "The assumption that God, if he wanted to save Indians and Chinese, would do so in his own good way, was useful to many who perhaps really wanted to oppose missions for other reasons. The dangers of believing that God could confine whole races of men to specific fates in this fashion can be seen in South Africa at the present day [1959]" (in Zaehner, Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths, p. 146). Pro-offer Calvinists, however, do not appear to show any specifically racist

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possibly J.C. Ryland, Sr. and some Primitive Baptists) agree that the Gospel should be preached to all parts of the world, so the argument is but a bickering over words.

Another argument was Hussey's contention that preaching, not offers, constitutes Biblical evangelism because in preaching, the Gospel is active and the sinner is passive; while in free offers, the Gospel is passive and the sinner is active.⁸³ This is but a restatement of the deterministic nature of divine energy in conversion. But High Calvinists do not feel that when they offer the Gospel God can do nothing until the sinner receives it. Granted, Arminian evangelism often says this, but the Federalist doctrine is that the Gospel is a means through which God is active. Through it He gives faith to the sinner, in which the sinner is entirely passive, resulting in active faith in the sinner. Gill and Brine accepted Federalism on this point, except that they preferred to speak in terms of preaching being the means. They do not use Hussey's argument.

One might ask what Gill the commentator does with the Scripture texts used to support the offer practice. Some of them, he explains, involve only the external call to unbelievers to attend the outward ordinances of church worship, preaching of the word, etc.⁸⁴ Others refer to outward reformation of unbelievers or national regeneration.⁸⁵ Some concern only the Jewish nation;⁸⁶ many refer to "what is God's will of

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prejudices with regard to the offer. In commenting on his preaching to negroes, Whitefield admitted, "In my public discourses I have freely offered the Lord Jesus to them" (quoted in Dallimore, vol.I, p.499).

83. Operations, pp.60-61.

84. E.g., Comm on Luke 14:17. See Section E below.

85. E.g., Body, pp.549-550; Cause, p.155. Cf. Palmer, Enquiry, pp.73-74; Parks, Five Points, p.81.

86. E.g., S & T², vol.III, p.117, and often; Styles, Guide, p.29. This is the view of Gospel Standard Article XXXIV: "And we further believe that we have no Scripture warrant to take the exhortations in the Old Testament intended for the Jews in national covenant with God, and apply them in a spiritual and saving sense to unregenerated men". Robert Sheehan, a recent critic of Hyperism, challenges this argument as follows: "Unless it can be proven from Scripture that every Jew from the time of Abraham to the fall of Jerusalem was regenerate then the commands to repentance and faith found in the Old Testament Gospels and Acts were addressed to unregenerate people. If this is so the whole Hyper-Calvinist contention that only the regenerate can be so commanded collapses" ('Critique', p.44). One is tempted to compare Hyper-Calvinism with Dispensationalism at this juncture. The latter school posits that more than a few of the commands and examples of the Old Testament and Gospels (and even Acts and some of the epistles, according to E.W. Bullinger) are irrelevant for today - especially for Gentile Christians since the

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command, or what he has made the duty of man; not what are his purposes man shall do, or what he will bestow upon them".⁸⁷ This is not the doctrine of Duty-Faith; it is only the commands which concern conditional blessing. Yet other texts speak of calls to "saints, to such who have a work of grace already done in them; and to such it is a call not only to the means of grace, but to partake of the blessings of grace".⁸⁸ Still others only call for the "external reformation of life" of Christians.⁸⁹ There is no 'offer' text in Scripture, therefore, there is no use of the word 'offer' in evangelism.

High Calvinists often state that it is an antinomy how they can offer to all men what God intends to give to only a few men, or how God holds men accountable to do what they are not able to do, or how one can give a free offer while holding to the doctrines of election or limited atonement.⁹⁰ Some, however, explain the antinomy in such a way that antinomy remains. For example, they say that the Gospel clearly states the difference between God's command and intention. Men are not able to believe because they have forfeited the ability to believe, for which God holds them accountable. And others hold that limited atonement is the basis of, not a hindrance to, universal preaching (see following Chapter). In effect, no antinomies remain. Hyper-Calvinists

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apostolic era. Some of this principle is accepted by historic Federalists with regard to the abolition of the Ceremonial Law (see Chapter X, Section E below), but Federalists have differed strongly with Dispensationalists on the distinctive point of Dispensationalism, viz, that 'Israel' always means literal, national Israel in the Bible and never refers to the Church except as a subsidiary or illustrative type. Dispensationalists have always firmly accepted the doctrine of the free offer, unlike Federalists, while they often differ from High and Hyper-Calvinism in denying that in our preaching we can call for repentance in the same way as those in the Gospels and Acts did. That is to say, repentance is seen as a temporary (even hypothetical, when seen after the fact) condition for the nation of Israel when Christ presented them the possibility of the Kingdom of God. This 'Kingdom' had reference solely to the earthly Millenium, and though it was rejected at that time it will one day be established when Christ returns. Therefore, it is argued, we cannot call upon men to repent today as a condition of entering the Kingdom. Some Dispensationalists go so far as to say that faith is the only condition of salvation; repentance had reference only to Jews.

87. S & T¹, vol.III, p.117.

88. Body, p.539.

89. E.g., Cause, p.106.

90. E.g., Packer, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God; Sheehan, 'Critique'; Honeysett, How to Address Unbelievers; Iain Murray, 'The Free Offer and the Marrow', p.13; The Forgotten Spurgeon, p.99; Fuller, Works, p.322; MacGregor, 'Westminster', p.57. On this point Pink wavers and is sometimes in agreement with the High as opposed to the Hyper-Calvinists. See Revelation, p.145; Election and Justification, p.156.

are reluctant to speak of antinomies. Logic prevails for them. We remind the reader of Gill's statement:

How irrational it is, for ministers to stand offering Christ, and salvation by him to man, when, on the one hand, they have neither power nor right to give; and on the other hand, the persons they offer to, have neither power nor will to receive ... It is not consistent with our ideas of God, that he should send ministers to offer salvation to man, to whom he never intended to give it...⁹¹

The difference between the two schools remains that of emphasis and consistency. Critics often say that Hyper-Calvinism is but the logical extension of High Calvinism.⁹² The Hypers simply reject certain words like 'offer' and 'Duty-Faith' which could be misinterpreted in an Arminian or Neonomian sense, but their basic premisses are identical with the Federalists. Nuttall says that this "arose directly out of the logic of High Calvinism".⁹³ The Hyper-Calvinists charge the Federalists with inconsistency and compromise and even deception; the Federalists accuse the Hyper-Calvinists with elevating reason above Scripture and "going in the high road to deism" (Jackson).⁹⁴ The problem, then, is a methodological one. They are reacting and over-reacting against each other, when in fact they basically agree. Their positions, we feel, are more complementary than contradictory. This is not to say that they are exactly the same, no. To use the actual-virtual scheme, of which both are so fond, we might say that they are virtually but not actually the same.

One may suppose that the disagreements between the two schools were due to personal differences. Indeed, their polemics were intensely personal. According to Toon, Hussey considered 'free offer' Calvinists to be only 'half-hearted Calvinists'.⁹⁵ (This compares with the accusation of 'five point' Calvinists against 'four point' Calvinists.)

91. S & T, vol.II, p.146 (emphasis mine). Those of the school of Hoeksema hold that it is a contradiction, not a mystery or paradox, to accept both divine sovereignty and the free offer. They admit that this opens them to the charge of employing "a too rigorous exercise of logic" (Engelsma, pp.47, 97; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.351-352).

92. See Toon, HC, pp.82, 130; Stebbins, p.40; De Jong, pp.72, 79; Manley, John Rippon, p.44; and Chapter III, Section E.

93. 'Northamptonshire', p.102.

94. Question, p.19. Cf. p.50.

95. HC, p.82.

For Hyperists free offers are Arminian.⁹⁶ And of course High Calvinists deny this. Hulse, for one, calls this allegation ridiculous.⁹⁷ Both schools oppose Arminianism but the Hyper-Calvinists seem to be bent on out-doing the Federalists in their opposition, even to the point of questioning whether Arminians are true believers. Arminians are seen as offering too much. High Calvinists are seen by the Arminians as not offering enough and by Hyper-Calvinists as offering too much. Hyper-Calvinists do not offer anything. Each feel that they have the proper position.

At this point the controversy becomes rather personal. Participants on all sides of the controversy have not always been reluctant to reveal what they feel are their opponents' real reasons for taking their respective positions - nor to speak their opinions of their opponents themselves. From the Hyperist perspective, the pro-offer position is vilified in strongest terms. It is Pharisaism, say some.⁹⁸ Wells condemned "the vile traditions of free-will, duty-faith, general offers, and the like", and stated that his worst enemies were 'Duty-Faith' Calvinists who are most dangerous of all because of their proximity to the truth.⁹⁹ Irons made the allegation that free offers insult God,¹⁰⁰

96. R.G. Martin, The Faith Once Delivered, p.4; Hussey, Operations, pp.257ff.; Homer Hoeksema, Voice, pp.353-354; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, pp.229, 233-234, 242; Palmer, Supremacy of Christ, p.23. Herman Hoeksema labelled them "camouflaged Arminians" who profess to believe in election and limited atonement while preaching offers (IK, vol.I, p.542). Engelsma opines that "the term 'offer' has the Arminian flavour" and "the offer is a fatal concession to Arminianism, so that the introduction of it into a Reformed, or Calvinistic, church is, in principle, the ruin of a church as a Reformed body" (pp.3, 13. Cf. p.49). In sum: "Rejection of the well-meant offer is not hyper-Calvinism, but Calvinism. The well-meant offer is an Arminian intruder in the Reformed camp" (p.42). John Raven surprises both Hypers and anti-Hypers with his frank confession: "I know some people seem to have no use for gospel invitations, they think that they are wholly Arminian, and that they would even find fault with a minister for bringing gospel invitations before the people, but these invitations are so sweet, so gracious, so suited to the condition of poor people" (Sermons, p.115). But Raven gave invitations only to poor people ('sensible sinners').

97. Free Offer, p.14.

98. Huntington, Works, vol.XI, p.175.

99. Reprobation and Election, p.19; Moral Government, p.7. "You might as well give me heathenism as give me Arminianism; you might as well give me popery as give me duty-faithism" (Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit, 1863, p.10; quoted in Oliver, 'Survey', pp.15-16). Wilks confessed that pro-offer Calvinists "are in fact my bitterest, if not my only enemies" (p.75) - and the converse may have been equally true.

100. Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.41. Moreover, "Universal offers is the Popish magic word for deceiving and plundering the people" (ibid., p.327).

while to Gadsby indiscriminate invitations are little less than blasphemy.¹⁰¹ Wallinger attacked the personal integrity of the offerers themselves: "Neither do I hesitate to say that those, however high-sounding their names, who deal indiscriminately in offers and invitations to dead sinners, are false teachers, so far".¹⁰² (We presume that this anathema applies to everyone before the great Joseph Hussey, including Calvin, the Reformers and the Puritans, as well as all non-Hypers since!)

Williams Parks is probably most frank of all on this. He explicitly considers offers to be blasphemous. As for those presumptuous preachers who have the audacity to say to their audience, "I offer you Christ", Parks gives this judgement: "I do not believe that any man who can use such language is a converted man, for he can never have known the difficulties of the new birth".¹⁰³ And since this estimation of the character and spiritual status of pro-offer Calvinists is quoted in an evidently approving way by Herman Hoeksema,¹⁰⁴ one must assume that the Protestant Reformed Church shares this conviction.

It does not end there. Hyper-Calvinists rebuke as "double-track theologians" those who teach the free offer doctrine.¹⁰⁵ They are said to be inconsistent, self-contradictory and hypocritical. Furthermore, free offers are rejected as wishy-washy pretensions at truth. The free offer Gospel is 'yea and nay' preaching, signifying nothing either consistent or Biblical.¹⁰⁶ By the same standard, those who offer Christ are too

101. Works, vol.I, p.71.

102. Quoted approvingly in Thomas Bradbury, I Don't Like Calvinism, p.7.

103. Five Points, pp.xvi, 18.

104. In Gertrude Hoeksema, Therefore, p.193. The edition of Park's Five Points we quote from was reprinted by the Sovereign Grace Union under the leadership of Henry Atherton, Bradbury's successor. Hoeksema preached for Atherton at the Grove Chapel in London and it was probably through this meeting that Hoeksema came into contact with Parks, though Hoeksema's extreme views were already formulated, else Atherton would not have invited him to fill the pulpit.

105. E.g., Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.354. See Chapters II and III above. This is more than expressing the opinion that pro-offer Calvinists are semi-Calvinists; they are pseudo-Reformed as well. The category is not reserved only for those who position themselves between Calvinism and Arminianism, but applies to Neo-Orthodox dialectical theologians as well.

106. The designation 'yea and nay' has been particularly popular with anti-Fullerites. Parks defines the term: "Confused - uncertain - contradictory - hesitating - indistinct" (A Sunday-School Dictionary, p.56. Cf. p.25). See also Huntington, Works, vol.XII, p.406; Hawker, Works vol.IX, pp.471-514; Stevens, Memoirs, p.11; Philpot, Answers, p.144; Colyer, Good News, p.71; Palmer, Erroneous Views, p.21; Letter to Spurgeon, pp.2, 7-8; Johnson, Faith, p.257; Wilks, p.30;

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bold. They assume to themselves authority which belonged only to the original Apostles. James Haldane used this argument¹⁰⁷ and it is given in Gospel Standard Article XXXII with some additional strictures on the misuse of Scriptural examples:

We believe that it would be unsafe, from the brief records we have of the way in which the apostles under the immediate direction of the Lord, addressed their hearers in certain special cases and circumstances, to derive absolute universal rules for ministerial addresses in the present day under widely-different circumstances. And we further believe that an assumption that others have been inspired as the apostles were has led to the grossest errors amongst both Romanists and professed Protestants.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, it was the opinion of the Hyper-Calvinists that offers are not only presumptuous but also cruel. To offer the Gospel to one who is not able to receive it is as much as to mock his pitiful condition as it would be to command a cripple man to stand up in order to receive healing.¹⁰⁹ Wells contended that the doctrine of Duty-Faith is jesting with sinner, mocking them by telling them that it is "their own personal, avoidable fault" that they are not saved.¹¹⁰ Pro-offer

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Wells, Letters to Theophilus, vol.II, pp.221-222; Styles, Guide, pp.232, 239, 247, 251. The term has reference to II Cor. 1:17-20, and in his Commentary on these verses Gill goes to great length to describe what is meant. The phrase refers to two main things, according to Gill: an unfulfilled promise and the attempt to preach things which are intrinsically contradictory. Hence, God cannot promise salvation to all men conditionally when He has promised it unconditionally only to the elect; to do otherwise would be to break the promise of the Covenant of Grace. Furthermore, says Gill, we must beware the false notions put forth by some which not only contradict each other but also the very essence of the Gospel. In this context he lists several doctrines as 'yea and nay', some being patently false but others are listed to show how the others contradict true teachings: "Yea and nay doctrines are particular election, the possibility of the salvation of the non-elect, the salvability of all men, and universal redemption; justification by faith, and, as it were, by the works of the law; conversion, partly by grace, and partly by the will of man; preparatory works, offers, and days of grace; and final perseverance made a doubt of..." (Comm on II Cor. 1:19. Emphasis ours).

107. Haldane's strong words in The Atonement, pp.118-120 should dispel any doubts that he was in fact a Hyper-Calvinist. He describes ministerial offers of grace as "evangelical Puseyism" and feels that "a degree of self-importance attaches to the words of a man offering the Gospel to his fellow sinners".

108. These were the sentiments of Philpot, who was opposed for them by W.R. Aikman in The Judgment of the Judges of Jehovah.

109. The 'mockery' argument is found in Irons, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.41; Stockell, Redeemer's Glory, pp.227, 229, 241; Palmer, Enquiry, p.14; Parks, Five Points, p.45; Styles, Guide, pp.67, 70.

110. Letters to Theophilus, vol.II, pp.22-23.

advocates reply in several ways. Some denied that offers mocked sinners,¹¹¹ while the Supralapsarian William Twisse countered with the agreement that offers are indeed mockery - but does not the sovereign, holy God have a right to mock sinners?¹¹² On another score, Hoeksema denied the practice of free offers because they flatter men.¹¹³ Those who believe in the free offer theory are seen as rather gullible persons who do not really grasp the intensity of the opposition which sinners give to their Creator, nor do they realize how subtle and powerful Satan is. James Haldane reasoned that if offers were Biblical, they would only play into the hands of the Devil by giving him the opportunity to scorn them and keep sinners in his clutch.¹¹⁴

It should be noted that as there are varieties of those against the offer and those in favour of the offer, there have been a few rare instances of persons who waver between the two. Pink, Burn and Cozens have been mentioned in this regard already, but we would call the reader's attention to the special case of H.A. Long. Though employing many of the classic anti-offer arguments, Long's Calvinism Popularized is a curious book which reveals a reluctance to go as far as the other Hyperists went in certain areas. The following extract is highly significant in this respect:

God no more offers life eternal than He does life natural. His ministers do. They may beseech and entreat in His name, but not He ... He does not offer salvation, but gives. By our offering to all, He gives to some.¹¹⁵

Here Long shows a close similarity to the views of Beza, Twisse and especially Richard Davis. Each of these accepted that we are to offer to all men. Yet these others also felt that we are to offer because God

111. E.g., Beart, Truth Defended, Part II, p.59. This was occasionally Pink's position (e.g., Gleanings from the Scriptures, p.339). Others in favour of offers argued that we can mercifully call upon men to do what is naturally impossible without mocking them, even as Christ mercifully called upon the man with a withered hand to stretch it forth. Of himself he was not able, but ability is given through the offer itself.

112. Riches, Part II, pp.158-163. Cf. Vigors M'Culla's passage on this point in Defence of Calvinism, p.69.

113. Good Pleasure, p.204.

114. The Atonement, p.175. Critics could well answer that the Hypers themselves are playing into Satan's hands by not giving all men offers of salvation!

115. Calvinism Popularized, pp.51-52, 54.

Himself offers - our preaching must be based upon the revealed will of God in the Gospel, no more and no less. Earlier we saw how Davis was moving towards the non-offer view by questioning whether God Himself offers. Long represents the next stage in the transition from High to Hyper: we can offer but God does not offer. This could be interpreted to mean that our preaching has wider scope than the revealed will, but more likely it indicates that the revealed will is in some respect wider than the secret will.

Elsewhere Long contradicts this position by denying that we are to offer at all. This was succumbing to the pressure of the Hyper-Calvinists and the desire for consistency. While he maintained that middle position (though still basically Hyperist), he was the target of arguments and attacks from those for and against offers. Pro-offerers charged that God does indeed offer salvation in the revealed will but not in the secret will; the two are to be kept in a paradoxical balance. Moreover, would it not be presumptuous for ministers to offer what God Himself does not offer? On the other hand, anti-offerers accused Long's position of inconsistency on the same grounds. Since God does not offer, neither can we. The revealed will must not be conceived of or presented as contradictory to the secret will.

The polemics continued further. Styles listed four reasons why, he felt, some persons believe in Duty-Faith: they want to protect their tradition; it gives them an opportunity to display their supposed preaching skills; they have a vague idea that the doctrine is to be found in some unspecified place in the Bible; and proponents of the theory do not trust in the power of the mere Gospel alone.¹¹⁶

Several others have argued that the free offer/Duty-Faith doctrine is an Arminian intruder into the Reformed camp and must be driven out at all costs. Calvinistic tradition must be protected. Critics of this position remind the Hypers that the free offer is itself part of the true Reformed tradition and that it is the rejection of it that is the intruder. Furthermore, it is because of Hyper-Calvinist tradition and a misunderstanding of Reformed historical theology that some people have rejected the offer. Hence, the first of Styles's reasons above applies to

116. Guide, pp.84-87. Wells mentions the last of these in Letters to Theophilus, vol.II, p.223.

the Hyper-Calvinist cause as well.

As for Styles's second reason, it could be countered that several Hyperists themselves affected a dramatic preaching style in the name of rejecting offers. This particularly applies to the great 'Experimental' preachers, such as Huntington, Gadsby and Wells. And so far as the third allegation goes, it has been granted that some pro-offer persons need more accurate Biblical exegesis to defend the offer, but the leading pro-offer theologians have provided numerous treatises showing just where the Scriptures teach the offer. In fact, they sometimes imply that the Hyper-Calvinists themselves are the ones with the vague notion that offers and Duty-Faith are not to be found in the Scriptures. The Hyperists' deplorable use of the Bible is evidence of this. And concerning the fourth reason, non-Hypers point out that it would be presumptuous to divorce the Holy Spirit's work from the Gospel which necessarily teaches and demands offering. That is, if the Hypers really believed in the power of God in the Gospel then they would do more to distribute the Gospel to sinners. That they oppose widespread evangelism and sometimes even foreign missions illustrates this.

It should be obvious that neither side considers the issue to be merely academic.¹¹⁷ Both doctrine and practice are involved. "All irregularities in worship or practice will be found ultimately to touch doctrine", wrote J.K. Popham.¹¹⁸ W.S. Craig accused some persons of misplaced zeal in this context. He rebukes

people over-anxious about adding to the church, people that are more zealous for members than they are for the purity and good order of the church ... and while we should always try to carefully shepherd these, we positively have no command to make sheep, nor assist the Lord to do so. The church should not be considered a factory where Christians are made. A false zeal will always lead down into error of some kind.¹¹⁹

Those who believe in active evangelism and free offers react strongly

117. E.g., Engelsma, p.49.

118. Counsel, p.80.

119. Short Articles on Primitive Baptist Faith and Practice, p.89. Huntington wrote to J.C. Ryland, Jr., to the same effect: "All labours bestowed on the goats, sir, will add nothing to the household of faith" (Works, vol.XI, p.150); therefore we should ignore them.

to this sort of argument. They grant that there have been abuses in certain quarters in the realm of evangelism, but that is not a valid reason for "throwing the baby out with the bath-water".¹²⁰ And is it Biblically correct to set up a dichotomy between pastoral work on the one hand and evangelism on the other? Did not the Apostle Paul exhort the young Timothy to do the work of an evangelist? As for making sheep, pro-offer proponents point out that the Great Commissions tell us to "make disciples" of all nations by preaching the Gospel to all creatures and that it is through our evangelism, not without it, that the Lord makes sheep. And though the church itself is not a 'disciple-factory', the Church and all of its members are to go into all the world with the Gospel (more will be said in this regard in the next section).

So much, then, from the Hyper-Calvinist point of view. What do their critics say about the real reasons why some reject the doctrine and practice of free offers/Duty-Faith? As in most controversies, strong evaluations are expressed on both sides and in the present one those defending the free offer are no exception. One recurring charge is that the anti-offer position is Antinomian in both doctrine and practice.¹²¹ That is to say, it rejects offer because of basically Crispian doctrines in theory, but in practice it is guilty of setting aside the important command to evangelize the world. Several further reasons are suggested for this disobedience: cowardice,¹²² laziness,¹²³ intellectual pride,¹²⁴ apathy,¹²⁵ being greedy with God's grace, a false mysticism,¹²⁶

120. On the use of this phrase in the Hyper-Calvinist controversy, see Homer Hoeksema, Voice, p.499. Even Philpot preached that "We are not allowed to argue against a thing because men abuse it" (Sermons, vol.X, p.76). So too Gadsby: "Must not the blessed gospel of God's grace be preached, because some who profess to believe it, and have at times appeared zealous in promoting the preaching of it, awfully abuse it?" (Works, vol.II, p.306).

121. E.g., Abraham Taylor, Address, p.1; Spurgeon, Autobiography, vol.I, p.227; Engelsma, pp.136-137, 141; Jackson, Question, p.52; Orme, in Baxter, Works, vol.I, p.676; Stonehouse, Fullerism Defended, pp.8-9. (More will be said on this charge in Chapter X.)

122. Custance, The Sovereignty of Grace, p.286.

123. William Carey, probably thinking of those such as J.C. Ryland, Sr., rebuked those who sit at ease in Zion while sinners perish (Enquiry, p.8).

124. Rice, Hyper-Calvinism, p.6; Predestined for Hell, p.103.

125. This relates particularly to the Hyperist parallel to Stoic apathy.

126. Dallimore mentions that the 'stillness teaching' of the Moravians caused some of them to stop preaching (vol.II, p.233), and some would like to apply this analysis to the Hyper-Calvinists, especially the introspective Experimentalists. Calvin rebuked this tendency in his own day: "Fanatics have taken from this to do away with public preaching as though it were superfluous in the kingdom of Christ, but their madness is easily refuted. Their objection is

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fear,¹²⁷ backsliding,¹²⁸ and false humility. Some have felt that those of the Hyperist persuasion do not really love God. How can they love God, it is said, if they do not love men and do all they can do to bring the Gospel to them?

Envy may be another reason. Those who are against free offers have always opposed those who were actively involved in the giving of offers. Dallimore applies this criticism with regard to Whitefield: "Whitefield was much disliked by some ministers - undoubtedly because of his Calvinism but also because of his zeal, which made certain other men's lack of it conspicuous".¹²⁹ The great evangelist himself comments on the opposition he received from some quarters:

I doubt not but that many self-righteous bigots, when they see me spreading out my hands to offer Jesus Christ freely to all, are ready to cry out, 'How glorious did the Rev. Mr. Whitefield look today, when, neglecting the dignity of a clergyman, he stood venting his enthusiastic ravings in a gown and cassock upon a common, and collecting mites from the poor people'. But if this is to be vile, Lord grant that I may be more vile. I know this foolishness of preaching is made instrumental to the conversion and edification of numbers. Ye Pharisees mock on, I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.¹³⁰

It is not merely that the Hyper-Calvinists have been non-evangelistic, one fears, but they go so far as to be anti-evangelistic. Thus they hinder the work of God.¹³¹ By opposing those who are doing the work of God they thus oppose God. Moreover, as Fuller charged, in

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is as follows, that after the coming of Christ there is no need for anyone to teach his neighbour. Public preaching is then to be done away with so that its place may be given to the inward inspiration of God" (Comm on Heb. 8:12). See Chapter X, Section F.

127. Engelsma says that Hyper-Calvinists are "afraid to call the unconverted to Christ" (p.140).

128. Some critics would use Sawyer's own words: "As soon as ever we begin to fall away from the simplicity and power of the gospel, we become backsliders in heart" (Sawyer, p.113).

129. Whitefield, vol.II, p.362.

130. Journals, p.265. Whitefield relates an incident in which a Dissenting opponent preached so vehemently and lengthily against prelacy (etc.) that when he came to invite poor sinners to Christ his voice was so gone that he could scarcely be heard. His text was the same as Gill's famous sermon, "Watchman, what of the night?" (Isaiah 21:11). (Works, vol.I, pp.307-308).

131. This goes against the temper of the doctrinal Antinomians. Dell warned: "Take heed you do not hinder the free passage of the gospel" (Works, p.142).

effect they blame God for the few converts they see and for 'the day of small things'.¹³² And they have the blood of sinners on their hands.¹³³ Of course, the Hyperists deny all this. Homer Hoeksema dismisses the whole idea that they are in any way responsible for the damnation of sinners or that they have the blood of sinners on their hands. The very notion contradicts the sovereignty God. "It is typically Arminian, of course."¹³⁴

Other antagonists of the Hyperist system feel that they over-react against those Arminians who try to do the work of the Holy Spirit themselves. Thus, the Hypers do not allow the Holy Spirit to do His work through them. They are actually resisting the Spirit who inspires evangelism and missions. Since they do not gather with Christ, they scatter. The Hyper-Calvinist theory may appear to be correct, but if it does not result in Scriptural application with respect to converting the souls of sinners it is a false theology. Hyperism, one sometimes hears, not only fences the Cross but locks the gate. Arminians and certain strains of Neo-Orthodox Calvinism, it is said, tear the whole fence down, while true Calvinism recognizes that there is a fence with an open gate. Some Low Calvinists, however, contend that many High Calvinists are virtual Hyperists: they believe in offers but do not give them. Their theory is not put into practice. In this vein, Isaac Watts implied that non-offer Hyper-Calvinist are more wrong but more consistent than pro-offer High Calvinists.¹³⁵

The relationship between the different schools of Calvinism and Arminianism, particularly in their historical development, cannot be ignored in evaluating the underlying motives of those involved in the controversy. Those who gravitate to the middle course between the extremes sense that the others are over-reacting against each other, thereby making serious compromises with respect to the propagation of the Gospel. In an important discussion of the debate between those who are active or over-active in evangelism (i.e. Moderate Calvinists and Arminians) and those Calvinists who are not, Horatius Bonar gave an

132. See Button, Remarks, p.5; and Section E below.

133. Cf. Kirkby, p.74; Doddridge, The Evil and Dangers of Neglecting Souls; J.C. Ryland, Jr., The Work of Faith, p.106.

134. Voice, p.479.

135. Works, vol.VI, p.284.

analysis which many High Calvinists would be slow to issue:

We may dread 'hyper-evangelism'; but is 'hyper-Calvinism' innocuous? If the former is to be charged with drawing many who are not drawn of the Father, the latter may with more truth be chargeable with repelling many to whom the Saviour says, 'Come unto me'.¹³⁶

If the preaching of the Word is an essential mark of the Church – which virtually all Calvinists have accepted¹³⁷ – and if the doctrine of the free offer is essential to the true preaching of the Gospel, can it not be surmised that the Hyper-Calvinist phenomenon threatens the warp and woof of the Church's mission, if not its means of reproduction and therefore of its very existence? The answer to this largely depends upon an investigation of the Hyperist view of evangelism.

136. The Old Gospel, p.57.

137. E.g., Hoeksema, Dogmatics, p.634.

E. HYPER-CALVINIST EVANGELISM

In this section we will examine the various answers given to Joseph Hussey's question: "How must we preach the Gospel, if we do not offer the Gospel?"¹

The preaching of the Word has always figured prominently in Hyper-Calvinist churches, and there have been several notable Hyperist preachers who gathered huge crowds several times a week. William Gadsby was famous as an exponent of down-to-earth Working Class preaching at the time of the Industrial Revolution and was in great demand throughout his long ministry. William Huntington was of the same sort, except that a few of his listeners were from higher classes. James Wells packed the Surrey Tabernacle weekly for decades, and as he did virtually no pastoral visitation his preaching was the primary if not the only attraction. In the large corpus of Hyper-Calvinist literature, a major part belongs to the publication of sermons, particularly from Wells, Philpot, Irons, Bradbury, Popham, and Hoeksema. There have been literally thousands of Hyperist sermons in print.

Our personal opinion is that the vast majority of these sermons are as dry as a desert with only the occasional oasis. However, we will not press our personal tastes nor ignore the fact that some messages have had a greater impact when delivered than when read (Whitefield's sermons are a good example). Regardless of the theological standpoint, very few Calvinistic sermons are noted for reading well (exceptions include Spurgeon, Calvin and Lloyd-Jones). Our critique, therefore, rests upon the actual content and what the preachers themselves have written.

In spite of their theological position on other points, the Hyper-Calvinists have stressed the primacy of preaching in a way that surprises many of their critics. Contrary to the opinion of some

1. Operations, p.124. The question occurs nearly verbatim in Hoddy, Memoir of Israel Atkinson, p.57; and in the title of Burn's How and What Are We to Preach? Of the Hyper-Calvinist works on preaching, see the following: Pink, Preaching - False and True; Parks, What is Preaching the Gospel?; Hoeksema, Whosoever Will, pp.131-139; Dogmatics, pp.635-655; IK, vol.II, pp.401-442, 693-712. Styles defined 'evangelism': "a desire for the spread of the Gospel" (Guide, p.252). Sheehan may well be correct in suggesting, "The continuation of its tradition in respect to addressing the unbeliever owes more to a tradition of preaching than a tradition of writing" ('Presentation', p.29).

opponents, they nearly always believed that the Gospel is to be preached indiscriminately to all men. This is not a minority view either, nor a later development, for we find it from the very beginning. Hussey gave as the first answer to the question above, "We must preach the doctrine of salvation to all sinners, in general, within the hearing".² The same opinion can be found in the special subject of our study, Dr. John Gill: "the Gospel is to be preached to all".³ Of course, this applies only to rational creatures;⁴ but as all men have the natural duty to hear and believe what God reveals to them, so the preacher has the duty to preach and proclaim to all.

We have already examined what the Hyperists have considered to be the essential content of the Gospel. In that they vary only slightly from those whom we describe as High Calvinists, though there is more

2. Operations, p.125. Also "in general ... among all, to all, and before all ... even to the non-elect ... to all promiscuously" (pp.140, 189, 66). Cf. Oliver, 'Survey', p.10. Hussey went on to list twenty ways in which the Gospel is to be preached, most of which will be covered in our discussion below. Cf. Operations, pp.203ff.; Toon, HC, pp.81-82.

3. Comm on Acts 5:20. So often in Gill: Cause, pp.53, 90, 164; Comm on Deut. 30:13, Psa. 49:2, Luke 13:29, Acts 5:20, Pro. 8:4, Isa. 4:5; Body, pp.540, 935-937. Robison wavers on Gill's position on this point (cf. Particular Baptists, p.16; 'Legacy', pp.117-118). Statements of the most explicit kind to the effect that we are to preach the Gospel to all men can be found in all sections of Hyper-Calvinism. A few examples: John Gadsby, Letter to Aikman, p.13; William Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.256-257, 260; Parks, Tracts and Addresses, pp.89-102; What is Preaching the Gospel?; Johnson, Riches, vol.I, p.171; Huntington, Works, vol.V, p.311; vol.VII, p.330; Wells, Vale, p.27; Moral Government, p.59; Styles, Guide, pp.70, 76; James Haldane, The Atonement, p.142; Hoeksema, Good Pleasure, p.166; IK, vol.II, p.708. Homer Hoeksema adds that Reformed and Arminian persons are in agreement on this (Voice, p.367). Foreman left no room for exclusion: "Gospel doctrines ... are to be preached to all men of all nations" (Remarks, p.32). Hazelton: "We preach to sinners; we have no one else to preach to" (Sermons, p.9). Johnson disagreed with some Calvinists while agreeing with others in stating: "Our commission is not to preach the Law, but the Gospel" (Evangelical Truths Vindicated, p.xxiii. Cf. p.74). On this issue, see Section F and Chapter X below. Depoyster hedges some as well. To him, we should preach to all but this does not mean that their destiny hinges on our preaching (Fragments, p.104. See below). Moreover, he went so far as to write, "Thus we see that the gospel is for the saved, and not for unbelievers" (p.97), which seems virtually a denial that we are to preach to all. Pink disagrees with "urging young believers to become evangelists by preaching the gospel to all and sundry ... This verse is far from teaching ... that it is the duty of every Christian to announce the 'good tidings' to all they contact" (Elisha, p.216). This is not merely saying that we need not spend every waking moment evangelizing every single person we ever meet. What Pink is saying is that we need to be discriminating in selecting those to whom we preach. Note that in the context Pink mentions 'the pearls before swine' argument (see Section D above). On Pink, see Belcher, Born to Write, p.74, and citations below. Numerous Hypers have affirmed that while we must preach to all, we are to offer to none, nor to preach a conditional Gospel, nor even to invite all (see Hawker, Works, vol.IX, p.506; Ramsay, Election, p.236; Engelma, p.29; Gospel Standard Article XXIX). That is to say with Palmer, "The gospel must be preached to all without distinction, but not without discrimination" (Law and Gospel, p.3. Cf. Erroneous Views, p.19). Almost the exact words occur in Hoeksema, IK, vol.I, p.284.

4. Comm on Pro. 8:4; Cause, p.32; Skepp, p.61.

difference with those called Low Calvinists. Be that as it may, the Hyper-Calvinists have felt that this basic Gospel is to be proclaimed to saint and sinner alike. It is basically irrelevant to observe that they felt that, as Engelsma writes, "A preacher must preach a different message to unregenerated sinners from that which he preaches to the converted elect".⁵ Virtually all preachers, Reformed or otherwise, would agree that there are some things which can be said to believers which cannot be said to unbelievers. This does not affect the basic Gospel as such but only the personal application.

This point is very important. Because of the nature of the Gospel, it can only be preached "in indefinite terms"⁶ to all. When addressing unbelievers, no preacher can know who is elect and who is not, and therefore he cannot say certain things to unbelievers which imply that he is elect. For instance, he cannot say "You are elect", though he would be warranted to say that to one who has given evidence of regeneration. By the same standard, he cannot preach 'the bold proclamation' that includes the statements "God loves you" and "Christ died for you". As we shall see in the next Chapter, these statements are seen as equivalent to stating "You are elect", for Christ died only for the elect and God actually loves only the elect. High Calvinists are in agreement with this analysis as well.⁷ Both schools feel that the basic Gospel should say that God has elected some, God loves these same few, and that these are those for whom the Saviour died. But no preacher has the right to make the personal application to his hearers who do not evidence regeneration. He can, on the other hand, be quite specific with relation to the Law. He can say to all men indiscriminately, "You are a sinner" and "You are under the wrath of God". This is because the Law has a wider scope than the Gospel.

This affects the manner in which the Hyper-Calvinist preacher presents his sermon. Many have been strongly doctrinal preachers (Gill, Brine, Hoeksema, Pink). Their sermons often read like lectures. Other Hyperist preachers - in fact, we would estimate most of them - have

5. Engelsma, p.136.

6. Comm on Isa. 55:1; Cause, pp.21, 31-32. Cf. Body, p.468; De Jong, p.48.

7. Cf. Owen, Works, vol.X, pp.300, 311-312; Lachman, p.16. Gadsby explains the common view: "We preach the various branches of divine truth in the gospel of Christ, in doctrine, promises, invitations, precepts, encouragements, ordinances, etc.; and we endeavour to point out the characters and cases to whom these truths are immediately applicable in their various situations and circumstances" (Works, vol.I, p.260).

been of another variety. This is something which is often quite different. It is what is known as Experimental preaching. This is not to be confused with practical exhortation. In essence it is usually without a pre-arranged structure, for often the Experimental preacher walks into the pulpit without the slightest idea of what he will say. These sort of preachers sometimes disdain doctrinal and expository preaching as being academic. How much more spiritual it is to simply let God speak through one. Occasionally one hears reference made to Mark 13:11 in defence of the practice, while critics feel that to make a regular practice of this is presumption and tempting the Holy Spirit.

Experimental preaching is seen as searching the inner thoughts of the sinner in a way that does not bear directly upon the actual content of the Scriptures. In this it tends to somewhat mystical, as we shall see in Chapter X. But even in Experimental preaching the preacher cannot make 'the bold proclamation' which Low Calvinists consider to be the very marrow of the Gospel. And because Experimentalism stresses sin more than grace (so far as the sinner's experience is concerned), it tends to be legal rather than gracious. And unlike the 'bold proclamation', it can specifically preach "You are a sinner" to all men. Hence, though there may be a difference in form between doctrinal and expository preaching on the one hand and Experimental on the other, both have definite qualities in common against Low Calvinism and Arminianism.

This is what has been called preaching in "the restrictive way". Even though the preacher must preach "in the clearest manner" and "without using ambiguous phrases, or words of double meaning",⁸ he cannot give the slightest indication that God actually desires the sinner to be converted or that the sinner has the duty to believe savingly in Christ. Lows feel that this sets up unnecessary hindrances on the unconverted coming to the Saviour, while the Hypers think that the exact opposite is the case. It is through such preaching that God draws the elect to Himself. This is because one of the primary purposes of preaching is the special calling of the elect. God has mingled the elect with the reprobate in the world. We do not know which persons are which, so we must preach indiscriminately to all. This is what the

8. Comm on Isa. 60:17, Gal. 1:23.

Hyper-Calvinists believe in theory.⁹ Whether they apply this in practice is yet another thing. The greatly err, therefore, who say that Hyper-Calvinists deny that the Gospel is to be preached indiscriminately to all men.¹⁰

A few example of how they addressed unbelievers will shed much light here. In a certain funeral sermon Gill addressed the unconverted children of the deceased with these words:

9. Cause, p.90; Comm on Eccl. 9:1, Luke 13:29; I John 5:14; Body, p.540. The 'mingled' argument is also found in the following: Hussey, Operations, pp.125, 189; Stevens, Help, vol.II, p.126; Kershaw, Grace Alone, p.159; Engelsma, pp.101, 122; Hawker, Works, vol.IX, pp.501-502; Pink, Sovereignty, pp.257-258; Objections, p.14; Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, p.708; Eating and Drinking Christ, p.168; The Gospel, p.15. Therefore, we are not to preach only to the elect (Engelsma, pp.63-64). On the other hand, Hoeksema teaches that we must address all the visible Church as if they were all regenerate persons (Believers, p.115). Wells said that we would be unfit for useful service in this life if we were able to discern who is and who is not elect (Moral Government, p.35). Stevens: "The Gospel is preached to men and not to devils, because God's elect are among men and not devils" (Help, vol.I, p.184). The preaching of the Gospel, then, is God's means of gathering His elect (Gadsby, Sermons, p.293). Furthermore, we should preach to all because we are commanded so to do (Pink, Sovereignty, p.175; Parks, Five Points, p.89; Tracts and Addresses, p.206. Cf. Murray, Life of Pink, p.61). Parks adds that God has ordained universal preaching as a means of leaving without all possible excuse those who hear but reject it; thus it is a means of increasing their damnation (Tracts and Addresses, pp.206-207). S.F. Belcher noted that while we are to preach indiscriminately to all, the Holy Spirit applies the message discriminately to the elect alone (Surrey Tabernacle Witness, vol.11, p.180). The 'mingled' argument is not distinctive to the Hyper-Calvinist system by any means. It can be found with regular frequency in the works of High Calvinists of all varieties and periods. For example, see Custance, The Sovereignty of Grace, p.282; Spurgeon, in Thornton, pp.86-87; Whitefield, Works, vol.IV, p.59; and even Twisse, Riches, Part II, p.163.

10. For instance, Engelsma: "In its classic developed form Hyper-Calvinism denies that it is the duty of the church to preach the gospel of salvation to all men and to call all men to believe on Jesus Christ. The gospel is to be preached only to the elect, and only they are to be called to faith" (p.36. Engelsma cites Hussey as an exponent of this viewpoint. See also pp.1-2, 11, 71). This allegation is entirely without foundation and only reveals Engelsma's deplorable misunderstanding of 'classic hyper-Calvinism', as he calls it. Since he expresses these views even on the first two pages of his book, not to mention in his definitions of Hyper-Calvinism, whatever else he says about the system will be based on a fundamental misunderstanding. Hence, we repeat out contention that Engelsma and the school of Hoeksema deny being Hyperist not because they are at essential variance with Hussey, Gill et al, but because they misunderstand that system. That one such as Engelsma should make such a gross oversight of the repeated statements of the mainstream Hypers as listed above is flagrant ignorance or worse. We are not in sympathy with the Hypers whom Engelsma misrepresents in print, but we feel that in the interest of Christian charity and theological precision they must be defended on this absolutely crucial point, particularly as Engelsma's recent monograph has reopened the Hyper-Calvinist dispute in many quarters and has introduced new perspectives to an already greatly misunderstood debate. Since our present work aims to be the most recent and comprehensive investigation of the controversy, this unpleasant aspect must be mentioned. By the same standard, we invite those involved in the current debate - including Engelsma, Toon and Hulse - to indicate from the sources where they feel we have erred in any essential aspect of our discussion, either in documentation or analysis.

May you his children that survive him, tread in his steps, and imitate him in everything praiseworthy, civil, moral and religious; attend the means of grace, and may the Lord call you by it in his due time, that you may fear and serve your father's God; and fill up his place in the world and church.¹¹

The "means of grace" here are church attendance and the preaching of the Word, not a call to be baptized or partake of the Lord's Table. There is no direct invitation to Christ, no offer of salvation, no warning of damnation. There seems to be a warning against presumption in the words "may the Lord call you by it in his good time", reminiscent of J.C. Ryland, Sr.'s famous rebuke.

Another incident is found in different circumstances when Gill spoke with his own daughter on her deathbed at the age of thirteen. At the funeral he recalled how she had felt conviction of sin, then desired an 'interest' in Christ, then desired a love for Christ:

She thought it was a hard thing to come to Christ... But she sometimes hoped she had an interest in him, though she durst not say she had, for fears attended her. But on her death-bed, discoursing with her father about divine things, she dropped these appropriate words, 'Christ died for me; which being observed by him, he said to her, 'my dear, can you say 'Christ died for you?'' 'Yes', said she, 'Christ died for me'.¹²

11. S & T, vol.I, p.530. The approach differs somewhat from that of the paedobaptist Hyper-Calvinists. These reject 'presumptive regeneration' (the doctrine that all baptized children of believers are regenerated or that we should presume that they are until they give evidence to the contrary). Hoeksema has set forth the view that we are to speak to our children as neither believing nor unbelieving but only as possibly either. Thus we instruct them in godliness until they give evidence of either unregeneration or of a regeneration growing up since their baptism. See Chapter V.

12. S & T, vol.I, p.405. We have numerous instances in which William Gadsby addressed the Gospel specifically to children (see especially Works, vol. II, pp.74-94). Some of these are to be found in his catechisms and hypothetical dialogues between a believing parent and an unconverted child. In some of them, the child is told how wretched a sinner he is and that without God giving him faith and repentance he will never go to heaven (e.g., pp.78, 82-83). But only God can show the child his real condition. As for the Cross, Gadsby says to his son: "he did it out of love to poor, perishing sinners; if he had not suffered these things, we must have gone to hell ... and Jesus so loved them, that he laid down his life for them" (p.87). This falls short of the personal 'bold proclamation'. As for the personal application, Gadsby says: "God grant, if it be his holy will, that you may never rest till you have found him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, that is, Jesus Christ; and may it be your happiness to be waiting and watching at wisdom's gates, till the dear Redeemer is graciously pleased to remove guilt from your conscience, by a precious application of his blood to your soul" (p.94). In other words, Gadsby cannot exhort him to believe savingly in Christ; he can but wait and hope that the Lord may save him if it be his will. This is further clarified when the son asks Gadsby to pray for him and teach him to pray. The father replies, "The Lord teach you to pray for yourself, for eternal things are

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Gill therefore notes that she sought after humility but was reluctant to be baptized and even more reluctant to attend the Lord's Table.¹³ Nevertheless Gill felt reasonably certain that 'a work of grace' had been done in her heart before she died. The incident reveals how Gill had emphasized the dangers of presumption and the need for humility. It is possible that she felt that "it was a hard thing to come to Christ" because of Gill's restrictive style of preaching. Or it could have been due to sinful reluctance. We cannot say with certainty. It is significant that Gill noted the initial stage of conviction of sin. Later we shall see how Gill felt that this was not only a necessary prerequisite but an actual part of conversion. That is, a truly sensible sinner is already converted, though he may not realize it yet.

The notion of conviction of sin is further illustrated in the following invitation:

Come to the Lord Jesus as humble penitents; let backsliders come for a fresh application of pardoning grace and mercy; let sensible sinners come to the person, blood and righteousness of Christ for justification and salvation; let them come to his word, and to his ordinances.¹⁴

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solemn realities, and personal matters" (*ibid.*). Critics sometimes use another illustration to show the folly of this method. When a son such as the one Gadsby describes reaches his rebellious teenage years, he is involved in a serious accident. The godly father is grieved to hear him curse God on the operating table before expiring, to which a bystander replies, "If you had taught him to pray and believe in Jesus, perhaps he would not have sworn and cursed God when the time came for him to meet his maker". Others feel that the Gadsbian approach, while stressing outward godliness according to the Law in typical Victorian style, ignores the inner life of the soul. Still others charge this approach with dangerous similarity to the modern idea of not forcing one's religion upon one's offspring. And there are yet others who feel that this approach ignores the spiritual well-being of the pastor's children, thus nullifying the pastor's usefulness as a minister (I Tim. 3:5). One has heard of those raised in families similar to Gadsby's growing up and never hearing what he must personally do to be saved, though hearing much about what he has done to be damned. Opponents may be forgiven for charging such Hyperist parents with having the blood of their own unbelieving children on their hands.

13. S & T¹, vol.I, pp.406-407. Gill himself was converted at the age of twelve but, as is typical within Hyper-Calvinist circles, he delayed his profession of faith and baptism until just short of his nineteenth birthday.

14. S & T¹, vol.I, p.34. Gadsby records several similar invitations to sensible sinners, some of which sound like invitations to the unconverted whereas he usually addresses them to those who have been quickened and as a result mourn for their sins, but do not yet have faith. Note the element of 'waiting': "We encourage every self-despairing sinner to hope in Christ, and to wait at the door of mercy, begging, praying, and hoping till the Lord come, to believe in, and rest upon Christ, as the only Saviour of poor sinners ... Wait at wisdom's gate, and trust in and rely solely upon, the precious name, blood, and love of Christ; and in the Lord's own time, thou shalt sing and say, 'This is my God, and I have waited for him'..." (Works, vol.I, pp.259-260; vol.II, p.192). See Chapter VII, Section 8.

The 'humble penitents' who are invited are of two sorts: the 'backsliders' are Christians who have fallen into sin and are being brought to repentance again as per Hosea 14:4; the 'sensible sinners' are new converts who need instruction about the doctrines of grace better to understand their salvation. Both are Christians and this is not an invitation to the unconverted. Crisp often gave the invitation "Come to Christ" to the unconverted but we have not found this the case with Gill, Hussey, Brine, Philpot, Gadsby, or the others. We know little of Hussey's exact style but the most generous exhortation he gave may have been, "Be of good cheer".¹⁵ Brine hardly says even that, but Philpot occasionally came closer to a free invitation by addressing men as possible sensible sinners and asking them, "Now, tell me, has the gospel ever come to you in power?"¹⁶ Of course, it is possible that these preachers spoke more directly than the few instances we have. But we cannot assume this without an argumentum e silentio and it would be safer to assume that the instances we have cited are representative.

At the end of a sermon on the Covenant of Grace Gill closed with the words, "Blessed are they they put their trust in him".¹⁷ This, however, is clearly a benediction upon those who already believe. It is not specifically an invitation or exhortation to believe in Christ.

This is not to say that Gill did not use imperatives in his preaching. We find numerous examples of commands in his Commentary, which contained the essence of his expository sermons covering the whole Bible. We find an interesting example in one place and may assume that Gill spoke these words, or words to their effect, in a sermon:

15. Operations, p.442.

16. Gospel Pulpit, vol.IX, p.7. Cf. vol.X, p.316; Sermons, vol.III, pp.30-31; vol.VIII, pp.88-89. Gadsby often put similar questions to sinners. See Works, vol.II, pp.229-230, 303-304, etc.

17. S & I, vol.II, p.108. Such benedictions are popular with the Experimentalist preachers and they reveal much of their theology and motives. Warburton: "God help you to trust in Him. I do not tell you if that is your duty and privilege, for you cannot trust Him, unless He gives you faith" (Gospel, p.31. But cf. pp.78-79). Note the following examples from Gadsby: "God help you to believe ... God grant that you may never rest till the Lord gives you rest by faith in Christ ... O that you may be made to pray to the Lord to give you faith; for faith is his gift, and the fruit of the Spirit. The Lord enable you to look to Jesus, for he is both the author and finisher of faith ... pray for faith in Christ ... May God in mercy grant, if it be his sovereign pleasure, that the goodness of God may lead you to repentance" (Works, vol.I, p.146; vol.II, pp.118-119, 280). Several of these motifs are combined with invitations to sensible sinners (e.g. vol.II, pp.213-214, 259), and he often uses the words "unless God gives you faith" (e.g., vol.II, p.116).

... change your minds, entertain other thoughts, and a different opinion of Jesus of Nazareth, than you have done, and believe in him, as the true Messiah and Saviour of the world; look upon him, not any more as an impostor, and a blasphemer, but as sent of God, and the only Redeemer of Israel; change your voice and way of speaking of him, and your conduct towards his disciples and followers; a change of mind will produce a change of actions in life and conversation: bring forth fruits meet for repentance; and make an open and hearty profession of repentance for this your sin.¹⁸

All this is an exposition of the command to repent in Acts 2:28. Assuming that he made the same application in his sermon as in the Commentary, we likewise assume that he applied it to the same sort of persons as described in the Commentary. And in the Commentary he describes the hearers as "convinced, awakened sinners" (i.e., sensible sinners). The words are spoken only to sensible sinners – new converts under a sense of sin. So we are back where we were before. These are not commands to all men indiscriminately.

We may ask how men are to be brought under a sense of sin. This is done by means of the Law, which pronounces the doom of sinners.¹⁹ Ministers must "warn sinners of their evil ways, and of the danger they are in by them ... and to convince them of the worth of their precious souls".²⁰ An example illustrates this:

There is no escaping this [Hell], but in, and through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by applying to him for life and salvation. If any of you are seeking to flee from the wrath to come ... and should be asking, Whither shall we flee?... There is no other way of escaping the wrath to come ... but by fleeing for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you in the everlasting gospel; by fleeing to Christ, turning to him, ... and being justified by his blood, you shall be

18. Comm on Acts 2:38 (emphasis mine). In one of the places where Pink is more generous in his evangelism he comments, "The apostle did not say, 'Be passive, there is nothing you can do', thus encouraging the fatal inertia of hyper-Calvinists" (Salvation, p.57). Unfortunately, we have very little from Pink's pen written, or recorded from his sermons, to unbelievers. In one place, however, he says, "Embrace the gospel offer and receive Christ as your Lord and Saviour" (Elisha, p.209).

19. Cf. Cramp, p.443.

20. S & I¹, vol.I, p.21. It is sometimes pointed out that a warning is neither an offer nor an indiscriminate invitation, nor an invitation to saving faith. On warnings, see Engelsma, p.62; Button, Remarks, pp.98-99; Palmer, Enquiry, p.32. Unlike Dell (Works, p.447) and Whitefield (Works, vol.V, p.101), Hyper-Calvinists have been reluctant to say that one of the great incentives for evangelism is the love of Christ. Low Calvinists often emphasize that the two main incentives are the wrath of God, whereof we warn men (II Cor. 5:10-11), and the constraining

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saved from wrath, through him.²¹

The Law creates the sense of sin and then the preacher directs the sensible sinner to Christ through the Gospel. Note that Gill says that the hope of salvation is "set before" these sinners. This does not mean "offer". The hope is proclaimed. But note also that all this is said to sensible sinners, those who despair of the wrath to come. A minister must remove all hope from a sinner before giving him hope in the Gospel. It is possible, then, to bring a sinner to the stage of despair by means of the Law; comfort by the Gospel follows. But if this is so, then the sensible sinner (who is converted, whether he knows it or not) is converted by the Law. The discrepancy is apparent to all except the Hyper-Calvinist. And there are High Calvinists who maintain the same pattern. Crisp, however, stressed that the only thing that really brings a man to sensibility of his sins is the Gospel, not the Law.

One may be tempted to imagine Gill preaching in an apathetic way, not caring whether the hearer believes the Gospel or not, but Gill himself says that this is not how preaching is to be done. He says that we must preach and cry with "fervency and earnestness" and "with all the strength thou hast".²² Whether Gill actually preached like this is not known. But this is not to be confused with the earnest pleadings found in the sermons of the Evangelical Awakening evangelists. Gill warned against presumption and hastiness: "a profession of religion is not to be taken up hastily, without due consideration of the nature and importance of it".²³ This calls for men to count the cost and warns against hypocritical professions. It may be a warning against the shallow professions of heretics (especially Deists) and it shows Gill's reluctance to encourage men to believe.

What did Gill encourage men to do? As shown earlier, he encouraged

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love of Christ for the world of sinners for whom he died (II Cor. 5:14-21).

21. S & T¹, vol.II, p.126.

22. Comm on Pro. 9:3, Isa. 40:9. Engelsma describes the external call of the Gospel as to be given "unfeignedly, seriously, most earnestly and truly" - but not "well-meant", for the call is a command and not an offer (pp.9, 15, 17, 19, 23, 47, 68). Philpot says that Gadsby was often very fervent in his preaching: sometimes he thumped the pulpit vigorously, other times raising his voice; but Philpot reminds the reader that Gadsby's extremes never went to the extent of taking off his coat in the pulpit, or the like. See John Gadsby, Memoir of Gadsby, pp.101, 106, 108, 110, 112.

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sinners to attend the means of grace, especially the preaching of the Word.²⁴ Men are to be invited mainly to "a persistent waiting on the means of grace", for God may use these means to convert their souls.²⁵ Now High Calvinists (Keach²⁶) also called upon men to attend the means of grace but also exhorted men to believe while waiting. Hyper-Calvinists, however, emphasized the instructive aspect of preaching more than the hortatory.²⁷ Some might speculate that there is a contradiction here of what Gill said earlier about not casting pearls before swine. Earlier he said that ministers should not bother to continue to speak to those who persist in their unbelief, yet here he says that these unbelievers should persist in hearing the preaching of the Word, even if they do not believe.

An important comment must be made at this juncture. Most High and virtually all Hyper-Calvinists have felt that the evangelistic commission is to be carried out through the gathered Church on their own territory rather than to the world on theirs. These have felt that the best way for one to evangelise an unbeliever is to invite him to a church service, encouraging him to continue to do so over a period of time in order to receive regular, in-depth instruction in the Gospel by one who is specially gifted to preach. After he has been observed sitting under the preaching of the Word for a while, if the person is elect he should

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23. Body, p.746.

24. Cause, p.20; Body, pp.539-540; S & T, vol.I, p.530; Song, p.274; Comm on Luke 14:23, 17:14, Pro. 21:16, II Peter 3:18. Cf. Button, Remarks, pp.36, 88, 99; Martin, Thoughts, vol.II, pp.40-48; Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.119; Pink, Sovereignty, p.195; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.631-634; TK, vol.II, pp.389-419 (especially pp.399-400); Engelsma, p.59. Hussey wrote that "Invitation is but to means of Christ, not Christ himself" (Operations, p.407. Cf. p.405). Similarly, Ramsay said that we are to invite sinners "to the means and ordinances of salvation, not to salvation itself" (Election, p.215); whereas virtually all other Calvinists hold that we can invite men directly to Christ and not merely indirectly through 'the means of grace' (e.g., Beart, Truth Defended, Part II, p.64). Parks took the Hyperist position here, explaining it to a sinner like this "Attend upon the means, then; and of this be assured, viz., that if you have the desire to seek after God, God has already been seeking after you" (Tracts and Addresses, p.219). Cf. our comments on prayer in Chapter III above. Stevens also follows the Hyper-Calvinist line here with the proviso that "God cannot have made it the duty of some men to attend the means of grace, because he is determined not to afford them opportunity of doing so" (Help, vol.I, p.160. Cf. vol.II, pp.81-94). Even in his 'free offer' day Hussey felt that "Dead sinners may be brought to some outward means of grace" (Gospel-Feast, p.136). On the term 'the means of grace', see Chapter XI below.

25. Body, p.934.

26. Everlasting Covenant, p.44.

27. Cf. Hussey, Operations, pp.406, 440; Pink, The Atonement, p.288.

be expected to come under conviction of sin, in which case the minister counsels with him personally in the manner described by Gill and Gadsby above. That is, he is told of the Law and the vagueness of the Gospel, with the exhortation to wait and search within himself for the evidence of faith and repentance, with the warning of presumption and the benediction, "May God call you in faith in His own good time if it be His will". Those who have sat under this process for a long time and are still troubled about their souls are told to continue in it, for the fact that they are troubled may be evidence that they are being worked upon by the Spirit. This cycle can go on for literally years, yes, even for one's entire lifetime. When few conversions result from this process, the Hyper-Calvinists explain that salvation is entirely in the hands of God, they are free from blame, and that this is a 'day of small things'.

The more moderate High Calvinists and most Low Calvinists have strongly disagreed with this process. Rather, they put forward this alternative: Christians are not to exhort the world to come into the visible Church, but instead Christians are to go into the world and tell sinners the Gospel there. Preaching need not be in a certain building at a certain time by a certain man - does not such a notion resemble Popery? Every Christian can tell the Gospel. Moreover, an unbeliever need not go through a lengthy period of instruction in order to understand the Gospel. Rather, it is said, the Gospel can be summed up in a single conversation, the Christian emphasizing the relevant points as the case may be and answering as best as he can the questions of the unbeliever. By encouraging an unbeliever to sit under preaching which is vague or at best for Christians only is not calculated to convert unbelievers. Indeed, after sitting through such a process he may well become complacent ('Gospel-hardened') or even make a false profession by knowing exactly what is expected of him and realizing that the Church is probably desperate for converts or members. Hence, one is either driven away or is made a Pharisee. So goes the criticism.

The criticism continues. Low Calvinists stress that in whatever context the Gospel is proclaimed, the 'bold proclamation' must be made. The sinner, regardless of his sensibility of sin, must be told "God loves you and Christ died for you" in addition to the other points of the Gospel. Furthermore, he must be exhorted and invited to come to the Redeemer, not merely to the means of grace (such as Church services). This is the full and free offer as pictured by the Low Calvinist system.

Moreover, it is noted that a sinner need not wait a long time in order to be saved. He may be saved at any time, for God is now willing that he believe in Christ. If there are no conversions, it is not due to this being a 'day of small things' as such (which smacks of blaming God, they say), but rather the blame is on the Christians who do not carry out the proper method in the proper spirit.

We can see inklings of this alternative perspective in the preachers whom the Hyper-Calvinists opposed. George Whitefield preached the Gospel outside of Church walls, and the Methodist revival stressed personal evangelism, the urgency of the call, the incentive of love, and, from the Wesleyan side, the 'bold proclamation'. At the centre of the Evangelical Awakening and the Great Missionary Movement was the conviction that we should not sit back and wait for sinners to come to us, but instead we must recognize that there are already more than enough opportunities available and that we should go to them. The leaders strongly rejected the semi-Hyperist notion that all one need do is live a holy life which will cause sinners to inquire about the way of salvation. A holy but silent life is seen as an uninterrupted parable, even one which can be misinterpreted. But, of course, the Evangelical Awakening was rejected as 'enthusiastic, semi-Arminian nonsense'.

We will mention only in passing the rumour that Gill seated believers on one side of the church hall and unbelievers on the other side, and addressed only the former. We have found nothing to prove or disprove this rumour.

Now Gill maintained that "faith in Christ is the end of preaching",²⁸ but what kind of faith is called for in his preaching? Fuller summed up the matter:

The question is not whether men are required to believe any more than is reported in gospel, or any thing that is not true; but whether that which is reported ought not to be believed with all the heart, and whether this be not saving faith.²⁹

28. Comm on I Tim. 3:16. Ironically, Gill also wrote, "The ministry of the word is for the conversion of sinners; without which churches would not be increased nor supported, and must in course fail, and come to nothing" (Body, p.931). Given the fact that Hyperist churches rarely see many conversions and are often on the brink of closure, many critics feel that the answer lies close at hand in Gill's own account.

29. Works, p.151.

Fuller and Taylor felt that Hyper-Calvinists held that only the 'faith of assent' was required by the Gospel.³⁰ There is some evidence that they were correct. For example, Gill wrote:

... such are bound to believe the report it makes, and give an assent to the truth of it; and which is no other than an historical faith, and which men may have and not be saved; and which the devils themselves have: so that men may be bound to believe, and yet not to the saving of their souls; or that Christ died for them.³¹

The allegation at first seems correct. Fuller asserted that we believe in Christ and the propositions of the Gospel concurrently. Not all that believe the Gospel believe in Christ but no man can believe in Christ without believing in the Gospel, for Christ is presented through the Gospel.³² Gill denied that men are required to believe more than is in the Gospel or anything that is false. For this reason he denied that men are required to believe that Christ died for them. To require them to believe that is to give the children's food to dogs and to require a man to believe that he is elect. This is not of the immediate essence of faith. Furthermore, said Gill, whatever is believed is to be believed wholeheartedly. Sinners are commanded to "take hold fast" of the Gospel "attentively ... with a cordial affection to it, and an eager desire after it". Further, "such may be said to take fast hold of it, who receive it into their hearts and not into their heads only".³³

Nevertheless Gill did admit that "it is both the duty and privilege of persons to hear the Gospel of Christ".³⁴ This agrees with Fuller's statement that all men are required to believe the Gospel. But still this is not special faith. Gill further comments:

... none are bound to believe in Christ, but such to whom a revelation of him is made; and according to the revelation is the faith they are obliged to. Such who have no revelation of him, as the heathens, are not bound to

30. Cf. Taylor, Address, pp.34-35; Toon, 'Line Street', pp.46-47.

31. Body, p.468. Cf. p.539. So too Button, Remarks, p.25; Styles, Guide, p.75; Wayman, Further Enquiry, pp.26, 37, 127; Atkinson, Faith, p.153.

32. Works, p.155.

33. Comm on Pro. 4:13. Cf. Body, p.934.

34. Comm on Pro. 8:34. Cf. Body, p.933.

believe in him ... Such who have only an external revelation of him by the ministry of the word, are obliged to believe no more than is included in that revelation, as that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, who died and rose again, and is the Saviour of sinners, etc, but not that he died for them, or that he is their Saviour.³⁵

One of Gill's basic premisses is that obligation is in proportion to revelation.³⁶ Fuller accepted this but contended that this was not at issue. Fuller seems to be saying that a man needs to believe that Christ died for him, which is part of saving faith. But Gill says that this would require one to believe what is not revealed in the Gospel, therefore they are not required to believe it. Low Calvinists assert that men are required to believe that Christ died for them, therefore it is part of the Gospel revelation. (See further in Chapter IX).

Again Gill agreed that rejection of the Gospel is a heinous sin.³⁷ In fact, he felt that there would be worse condemnation for those who hear and reject the Gospel than for those who never hear at all.³⁸ To hear

35. Cause, p.164. Cf. also Cause, pp.31-32; Body, p.468; Stevens, Help, vol.II, p.66; Wayman, Further Enquiry, p.106; Ness, p.52.

36. Cf. S & T, vol.I, p.82; Cause, pp.31-32, 166, 210.

37. Cause, pp.33, 181; Body, p.540; Comm on Heb. 2:3, 12:25, Acts 5:20, I Peter 4:6. So too Pink, The Atonement, pp.302-313; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, p.471; Hoeksema added that there is extra punishment for the reprobate in the sphere of the Covenant who taste but reject the Gospel (Believers, pp.132-145, especially p.143). Jackson argued that the rejection of the Duty-Faith and free offer scheme meant accepting the view that lack of special faith is not a sin (Question, p.47). The more extreme Hyper-Calvinists have been bolder than Gill, Pink and Hoeksema here. Several of them have admitted that they do not think that rejection of the Gospel brings extra guilt, nor that one is condemned for lack of special faith, nor even that he is "at fault" and to be blamed for his condition as such. See Button, Remarks, pp.61-66; Wells, Reprobation and Election, p.41; Styles, Guide, p.76; Manual, p.203. See Sheehan, 'Presentation', pp.33-34. "Why must there be a fault somewhere?" asked Palmer (Moral Accountability, p.6). Wells: "To blame the non-elect for being lost would be to blame God for placing them in that natural and federal union to Adam (and) to blame God for not saving them" (Wells, Moral Government, p.38. Cf. pp.9, 36, 39; Letters to Theophilus, vol.II, p.21). Button: "As none will be condemned for not believing elected, so none will be condemned for not having special faith" (Remarks, pp.55-56). The key to understanding this theory is the Supralapsarian doctrine of reprobation. According to this, sinners are to be condemned solely because of their sin, with no reference to the Gospel at all. "Future punishment (is) not augmented by refusing offered grace", explained Styles, for sinners are condemned because of their sin and not because of rejecting any supposed offered grace (Guide, p.69; Manual, pp.23, 56, 233, etc.). More recently, R.G. Martin has quoted R.J. Baldwin: "unbelief is the evidence that a soul is lost, and not the reason that this is so" (The Faith Once Delivered, p.9). This is more than countering the view propounded by some Arminians, that the only reason that a soul is damned is because it rejected the Gospel offer. These Hypers go so far as to say that there is little difference regarding the reprobate whether they hear or not.

38. Cause, p.103; Comm on Matt. 10:15, I Peter 4:17. So also Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.71; Cozens, A Christmas Box, p.36; Engelsma, p.67. Foreman, who took the line of Wells and Styles described above, rejected the position of Gill and Gadsby. He considered it to be Fullerite and counter-

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and reject is the great sin against the Holy Spirit. To sin against the Gospel is worse than to sin against the Law.³⁹ And High Calvinists are in agreement with this.⁴⁰ But those who hear and reject are not condemned for not believing that Christ died for them but for rejecting that Christ is the Son of God, etc.⁴¹ And almost every High Calvinist agrees with that. Fuller seems to be advocating something that is more compatible with Low Calvinism. Some of his critics accused him of inconsistency and Low Calvinism.⁴² They said that his propositions made sense only on the basis of a universal atonement, while others thought merely that his views led to Low Calvinism. But it is also admitted that his views led to the Great Missionary Movement.

We may ask whether any man can be saved without hearing the Gospel. Most Hyperists flatly denied it, but others are not so clear.⁴³

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argued that if it were true that one's damnation is increased by hearing and rejecting the Gospel, then it would be better that men heard the Gospel less and even not at all (Remarks, p.15). This is a curious argument, for it seems aimed at stopping all evangelism. In effect, the school of Stevens and Palmer opposed most missions, but not all. Foreman was simply saying that the Fullerite position is contradictory to the missions it encourages.

39. Body, p.340.

40. E.g., Goodwin, Works, vol.VII, p.56; Jackson, Question, pp.14-23; Stonehouse, Fullerism Defended, pp.17-18.

41. Body, p.468.

42. For example, Rushton, Stevens, Martin, Button, Foreman, et al.

43. Those who answer in the negative include: Hoeksema, Whosoever Will, p.131; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.152; and even Styles, Guide, p.122. Styles comments that there is also no second chance for those who have never heard the Gospel. On the other hand, the Primitive Baptists have sometimes felt that there is the possibility of salvation outside of the Gospel, but not outside of Christ. Depoyster summed up the theory: "A knowledge of the truth is not essential to salvation" (Fragments, p.19). Pittman held that the elect will be saved even if they never hear the Gospel, for Christ Himself can bring it directly to them (Questions, pp.62, 64). The Gospel was never designed to save dead sinners, wrote Depoyster. To take the line that only those who hear can be saved is to make one's eternal salvation dependent upon the faithfulness of those to whom the preaching of the Gospel is committed. But this would frustrate the grace of God and the atonement of Christ (Fragments, pp.60, 64, 90-116). Arguing similarly to Foreman's anti-Fullerite argument above, Depoyster adds that there are some who suggest that the heathen who never hear have the chance of being saved because of their ignorance; if this were the case it would be better not to preach to any (p.104). Furthermore, he thinks that it is incredible that it is God's will that millions be damned who have never heard - even the vast majority of mankind? "It is difficult to understand how a person who believes this nonsense could even keep a penny for himself if he could do without it. If this theory is true, why spend millions of dollars for huge church buildings of the finest materials, when the money could finance such a great hoarde of missionaries to go to heathen lands and save billions more people" (pp.104-105. Cf. p.116). These extreme views have shocked even the mainstream British and Hoeksemitic branches of Hyperism, not to mention all the lower varieties of Calvinism. However, the same basic view has been held by Sarrells, another Primitive Baptist but one who is neither Supralapsarian nor anti-offer. Sarrells says that the (Fullerite) theory would deprive vast heathen

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At times Gill explicitly says that those who never hear are always condemned because of their sins against natural law.⁴⁴ The 'light of nature' requires repentance, worship, prayer, thanksgiving and obedience to the Moral Law.⁴⁵ But it does not reveal the Gospel, nor are the heathen required to believe the Gospel until they hear it.⁴⁶ They are still inexcusable.⁴⁷ And High Calvinists agree. The Gospel, however, is but the 'ordinary means' which God uses. Being sovereign, God can use any means He likes. He may use angels instead of men to bring the Gospel to men. But it is difficult to say whether He always uses the Gospel as a means. Gill says that it is safer to say that we cannot tell with certainty whether God will or will not use extraordinary means.⁴⁸

Much of the problem concerns whether regeneration is mediate through the Gospel or immediate in order to hear the Gospel. Or, to put it another way, does faith in the Gospel precede or follow regeneration? Low Calvinists, Lutherans and some High Calvinists hold that regeneration is mediate - grace is given at the exact point of faith and via the Gospel. This is yet another apex logicus, but a vital one for

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numbers of the benefits of Christ's atonement. Sarrells even goes so far as to state that even some Unitarians and Jews who have never heard the Gospel will be saved (Systematic Theology, pp.433, 501-502). The missionary-minded High and Low Calvinists take the very line opposed by Depoyster above - that Christians should support missions financially at all costs. Mainstream Hyperism, though, agrees neither with the Primitive Baptists nor the missionary-minded Calvinists on the point in question.

44. S & T, vol.II, p.118. So too Pink, Sovereignty, p.200. Proctor feels that Amyraut taught that all men everywhere can hypothetically be saved through the light of nature if he kept the natural law entirely; but in fact no man ever has, so no man will be saved outside of the Gospel, for special grace comes through the Gospel (Proctor, pp.285-288).

45. Body, pp.538-539.

46. Comm on Eccl. 11:7, Pro. 29:18. Gadsby said that men are guilty even if they never hear of a Gospel 'offer'. And yet, "Where the Lord has a people, and when the time has come to call them by his grace through the ministry of the word, he will see to it that the word shall be preached" (Works, vol.II, pp.34, 200). Comparisons with the senior Ryland's rebuke to Carey are obvious. Carey used these sentiments for the opposite purpose.

47. Body, p.540.

48. Cause, pp.180, 211; Body, p.538, 541; Comm on Pro. 29:18. Also, "how can grace be said to be given universally to men, when multitudes of men have not so much as the means of it?" (Cause, p.179). H.A. Long calls the Gospel "the usual mode" of salvation (Calvinism, p.183). The Westminster Standards state that the elect will be saved even if "incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word", but elsewhere they state that "They who, having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature" (Confession, X:3; Larger Catechism, Question 60).

Hyper-Calvinist evangelism.⁴⁹

Moving on, Gill admits that there are many non-salvific benefits which often accrue to unbelievers who reject the Gospel:

Moreover, by the external ministry of the word, many, though not effectually called, become more civilised and more moral in their conversation; are reformed, as to their outward manners; and through a speculative knowledge of the gospel, escape the grosser pollutions of the world: and others are brought by it to a temporary faith, to believe for awhile, to embrace the gospel notionally, to submit to the ordinances of it, make a profession of religion, by which means they become serviceable to support the interest of it.⁵⁰

This temporary faith is not special faith. It is a highly developed form of historical faith but does not contain the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. Those who go thus far but no further are damned above all

49. Occasionally Gill sounds as if he believed in mediate regeneration (e.g., Comm on I Peter 1:23), but by and large it appears that he did not. The doctrine of immediate regeneration builds much upon the ideas of irresistible grace according to the doctrines of Hussey's 'operations of grace' and Skepp's 'divine energy'. One often reads that free offers and Duty-Faith contradict the Biblical doctrine of regeneration (e.g., Elias Omega, The Doctrine of Regeneration Versus Duty Faith). Foreman contended that the error of Duty-Faith is that it requires men to give themselves the new birth, which is as impossible as an uncreated being giving itself natural birth (Remarks, pp.22, 42). So too Styles, Manual, p.204. The school of Hoeksema seems to us to waver here. Herman Hoeksema explicitly stated that "This (special) calling comes to sinners through the Word, the Scriptures, the preaching of the gospel. It is not a sort of direct, mystical calling which God sends into the heart immediately, without the preaching of the gospel" (Good Pleasure, p.93). And yet elsewhere he wrote, "regeneration in its deepest sense is immediate, that it is not wrought through the preaching of the gospel" (IK, vol.II, p.429. Cf. pp.420-433). His son Homer Hoeksema says that the question is not whether there is a relationship between regeneration and the Word, but over what that relationship is. In one sense, regeneration is mediate - this is the "broader sense". But in the specific or proper sense (what Herman Hoeksema called "its deepest sense"), it is immediate. That is, "the preaching of the gospel is the means, not the efficient cause"; the efficient cause is the grace of the Holy Spirit. See Voice, pp.133, 521-522, 561-562, 825-837. It must be noted that the Hoeksemas also believe in infant regeneration apart from the Word, a concept rejected by most Baptist Hypers. This presents special problems which we have mentioned in Chapters IV, V, VI and VII. Related to their general rejection of the idea that there is no salvation outside of the Gospel, mainstream Primitive Baptists accept an extreme doctrine of immediate regeneration that is clearly associated with Two-Seedism. Depoyster: "This gospel regeneration theory is nothing short of a fable" (Fragments, p.104). Regeneration occurs before the Gospel is believed; why not when it is not presented? One is regenerated in order to believe, not vice-versa. And other Hyperists accept the principle. "The sinner doesn't accept Christ that he might be saved, but he is disposed to love and accept Christ as the result of being saved and learning about him" (ibid., p.102). See also Pittman, Questions, pp.71-72; Sarrells, Systematic Theology, pp.427-444, 498-505.

50. Body, p.540. So also Pink, Sovereignty, p.258; Objections, p.14; Election and Justification, p.157. This is related to the doctrine that the reprobate are serviceable to the elect, for which see Chapter IV above.

others.

Gill emphasized the differences between the external and internal calls. The recipients of each are not always identical. Not all receiving the external call receive the internal call; and some get the internal call without the external call.⁵¹ The external call does not call upon men to regenerate themselves: it only tells them of the necessity of regeneration, which is given by the internal call. The external call does not call men "to any spiritual vital acts, which they are incapable of, being natural men, and dead in trespasses and sins".⁵² This does not mean that men are not responsible to believe the external call. "Men are obliged to give credit" to the external call and are condemned with greater condemnation if they reject it.⁵³ The external call requires men

to perform the natural duties of religion; to a natural faith, to give credit to divine revelation, to believe the external report of the gospel ... to repent of sin committed ... to pray to God for forgiveness ... to pray to God for daily mercies that are needed, in a natural and moral duty; as well as to give him praise, and return thanks for mercies received ... to attend the outward means of grace, and to make use of them; to read of the holy scriptures ... to hear the word, and wait on the ministry of it, which may be blessed unto them, for the effectual calling of them.⁵⁴

Men can give only the external call, never the internal one. Only the Holy Spirit can give the internal call. The one is resistible and is usually rejected; the other is irresistible and is never rejected. All this is accepted by High Calvinists. Arminians are divided amongst themselves here but usually reject the idea of a special call, certainly one which is irresistible. And both High and Hyper-Calvinists agree that the external call does not require one to believe that he is elect, nor that God loves him, nor that Christ died for him. Some Hypers, like many Arminians, deny the dichotomy of the two calls, but this is a minority view. In any case, all Hypers deny that to call is to offer.⁵⁵

51. Body, pp.538, 541. Cf. Cause, pp.31-32. On the doctrine of external and internal calling, see: Body, pp.538-545; Hussey, Gospel-Feast, pp.44-45; Stevens, The Words of Truth, pp.86-92; Hawker, Works, vol.II, pp.32-55; Irons, Jazer, pp.87-92; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, pp.465-476; Good Pleasure, pp.87-101; Pink, Godhead, pp.193-205.

52. Body, p.539.

53. Body, p.468. Cf. Cause, p.33.

54. Body, p.539.

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How did Gill fare in his preaching? One friend preached at Gill's funeral and stated that Gill had been used in the conversion of "not a few" persons.⁵⁶ This has been questioned by some who point out that the size of Gill's congregation greatly decreased during his pastorate. Gill argued in his defence that "some ministers are more useful for edification than conversion"⁵⁷ but we never find him commending the practice of evangelism or the evangelists of his day. Properly speaking, said Gill, the office of evangelist is extinct. Only when a minister preaches the Gospel does he approach being an evangelist.⁵⁸ Most likely Gill did not approve of lay-preachers, especially those acting without the approval of a local church. But this disapproval was the norm among High Calvinists, even with Rippon.⁵⁹ Consequently we find in

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55. Styles rejects the distinction between general and particular calling, which is much the same as the dichotomy of external and internal calling. When investigated closely, however, what he is saying is merely that in the preaching of the Gospel not all men are invited to exercise saving faith in Christ - that call goes out only to the regenerated. See Manual, p.132. On the differentiation between the ideas of calling and offering, see Body, p.540; Engelsma, pp.13, 68. No Calvinist to our knowledge is contending that in the internal call God/the preacher offers grace; the dispute almost entirely concerns the external call. Often reference is made to Luke 14's two invitations (calls): the former represents the external one for all men, the latter is the irresistible and compelling one for the elect alone. Some lower Calvinists point out that the former was still sincere and to the same feast as the latter. Hence, there can be no unlimited external call to a limited atonement. Also, it has been pointed out that Arminians forget that while many are called (external calling), few are chosen (election); while Hyper-Calvinists tend to overlook the fact that while a few are chosen, many are sincerely called.

56. Stennett, The Victorious Christian, p.33. Similar accolades are made in praise of Gadsby.

57. Body, p.316.

58. Cf. Body, p.863; S & T¹, vol.II, p.19. Philpot said, "in the Church of Christ there still remain some as 'evangelists', who simply preach the gospel, without having a settled ministry" (Sermons, vol.IV, p.84). This could be meant as approval of some itinerant preachers or as a rebuke of 'so-called evangelists', but probably the former.

59. Manley, Rippon, p.120. On the ministerial call to preach, see Cozens, A Christmas Box, pp.154-171; and A Treatise on A Divine Call to the Ministry. One of the charges against Richard Davis was that he travelled and preached without asking permission of the State, the Church of England, or even other Dissenting ministers. Davis, however, was not entirely itinerant because he was a pastor in Rothwell. Even so, he sent out such preachers, including lay preachers. See Glass, The Early History, pp.54-55, 69, 88-111. Hyperist churches have varied concerning the the regular ministry. Most have had full-time, ordained ministers; but when the supply is short, they often rely upon sharing the ministry with another like-minded church or hearing a sanctioned lay preacher. The Gospel Standard Baptists allow lay preachers but only if they are officially sanctioned. See Gospel Standard Rules, Article 23. The Antinomians accepted lay preachers, partly because of the difficulties levelled upon them by the Established Church and State at the time. See Dell, Works, pp.45, 230, 238-242, 331-332, 344, 452-453. On the other hand, some Hyper-Calvinists seem to have rejected the idea of lay preachers. Cf. Kershaw, Grace Alone, p.31. Hoeksema evidently did not accept them. Hyper preachers sometimes warn the people of presumptuously entering the ministry; (cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.II, pp.243-244 ; Pink, Sermon on the Mount p.293). Warburton was afraid of preaching before he was duly sent (Mercies, p.55). Of course, Hyperists do not accept women preachers (e.g., Hoeksema, Good Pleasure, p.181), and we have not

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Gill's writings no exhortations to his flock encouraging them to involve themselves in evangelism.

Gill accepted that we can pray for the conversion of the unconverted, but this must be submitted to the secret will of God. Prayers for specific persons must be something like, "Save him, O Lord, if he is one of your elect". We must not pray for the reprobate as reprobates, but no man can be known to be reprobate or elect. Besides, God will save His elect whether or not anyone prays for them, and He will not save a reprobate regardless of how many prayers are offered on his behalf by the elect.⁶⁰

What about some of the methods of evangelism employed by those who accepted the free offer? Do the Hyper-Calvinists consistently reject them? Not always. They have usually been avid supporters of Sunday Schools,⁶¹ but not always.⁶² The school of Hoeksema has accepted the idea of Christian schools in order to teach their children an entirely Christian world-view as opposed to the Humanist view presented through the State school system.⁶³ Hyperists have almost always rejected the notions of special evangelistic meetings within the local church or large-scale campaigns such as those of Whitefield, Moody or Graham. Naturally they have considered the idea of 'altar calls' to be strictly Arminian and they have unanimously rejected them.⁶⁴

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a single record of one. The closest would be the influence of Anne Dutton's poetry.

60. Cf. S&T², vol.II, pp.550-551; Body, p.945; Comm on I John 5:14; Hussey, Operations, pp.345, 350. Spurgeon and others rebuked Hyper-Calvinists for not praying for the conversion of sinners. Cf. Clipsham, p.102.

61. E.g., John Gadsby, Memoir of Gadsby, p.69, 118, 121, 128; William Gadsby, Works, vol.II, pp.305-310; Hoddy, Memoir of Israel Atkinson, pp.90-96; Philpot, Sermons, vol.I, p.27; Heir of Heaven, p.11; Hawker, Works, vol.II, pp.188-209; Styles, Guide, pp.229-232; Hoeksema, Dogmatics, p.653. Some have favoured the use of catechisms (Hoeksema, Gadsby, Hawker). For other literature used, see Parks, A Sunday-School Dictionary; and John Gadsby, Gadsby's Educational Books (four volumes).

62. Pink seems to have been against them because he felt that Christian parents should educate their children themselves, but this does not comment on the question of religious instruction for unconverted children or those of non-Christian parents. See Pink, Letters, p.117; Belcher, Born to Write, pp.102-103. Primitive Baptists have wavered on the point. For example, see the views of Pittman, Questions, pp.78-79; Biographical History, pp.9, 359, 378-379; Hassell, History, p.539.

63. Gertrude Hoeksema, Therefore, pp.64, 67, 70, 77, 115-117, 232; Engelsma, p.138.

64. E.g., Hoeksema, Good Pleasure, p.184; IK, vol.II, p.413; Pink, John, vol.I, p.177; Belcher, Born to Write, p.23.

They have not been entirely against the propagation of Christian literature, though some have opposed the idea of tract distribution.⁶⁵ History shows that several noted Hypers wrote a number of small tracts or published sermons individually for wide distribution.⁶⁶ For example, see Hawker, Irons, Wells, Hoeksema and Pink. Earlier we noted that several Hyper-Calvinists supported the Trinitarian Bible Society;⁶⁷ others have supported the British and Foreign Bible Society⁶⁸ or the Scripture Gift Mission,⁶⁹ but some have opposed all Bible societies.⁷⁰ Most have opposed the 'para-church' organizations given specifically over to home evangelism.⁷¹

This brings us to the matter of foreign missions.

It must always be remembered that the Great Missionary Movement arose as a direct result of the rejection of Hyper-Calvinism by certain moderate Calvinists, namely Andrew Fuller and William Carey. Consequently, one should not be surprised that the Hyperists suspected and opposed the Movement over the very points concerning which they disagreed with the Moderates. Though Fuller and the Movement did much to lessen the deadness and influence of Hyperism under John Gill, Hyper-Calvinism by no means came to an end at that time. The Missionary Movement quickly became a target of opposition and a rallying point of extreme Calvinistic critics. The rise of the movement, then, paralleled the growth of new varieties of Hyper-Calvinism.

There was, for example, the rise of the school of William Huntington, which later gave birth to the branch developed by William Gadsby and J.C. Philpot, namely the Gospel Standard Baptists. Then there was the

65. E.g., Pittman, Biographical History, pp.361-362; Philpot, Sermons, vol.VI, p.103.

66. Hawker founded the Gospel Tract Society for the propagation of his own and other tracts, but they can hardly be considered evangelistic. Most of them are found in his Works, vol.X. Colyer supported this Society (Good News, pp.81-86).

67. See Chapter II, Section B.

68. E.g., Styles, Guide, pp.228-229. John Gadsby recorded that his father "often had collections in his chapel for translating the Bible into foreign languages, and for circulating the Bible" (Memoir of Gadsby, p.123). See Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.262.

69. E.g., Pink, Letters, p.134.

70. E.g., Pittman, Biographical History, pp.362-363; Hassell, History, pp.322, 325.

71. Hoeksema, for instance, says that though they have accomplished a measure of good, their ultimate effect is more harm than good (Dogmatics, p.640).

school of Stevens, Palmer and Foreman, and later that of Wells and Styles. In America the Primitive Baptists reached the zenith of the popularity in the later nineteenth century and grew in direct proportion to the spread of missionary zeal in other quarters. The school of Hoeksema, on the other hand, was not directly related to what was going on concerning foreign missions, although the question was related to the 'well-meant offer' controversy. None of the afore-mentioned strands of Hyper-Calvinism have been noted for involvement in foreign missions; indeed, they all have the unsavoury reputation for being non- and even anti-missionary (especially the Primitive Baptists).

Occasionally one reads where some of these supported some missionary involvement,⁷² but these are quite rare and virtually just nominal involvement. Few actually took the extreme line of the senior Ryland's rebuke to Carey, but more than a few expressed disgruntlement with the Missionary Movement as such. One sometimes reads where they were not objecting to missions as such; it was only missions as currently practiced to which they objected. John Gadsby comments on his father's position:

Mr. G. was no great friend to Missionary Societies, as he believed that the great bulk of missionaries that went out went to publish erroneous doctrine. He also considered that there was great fraud practised by some of the missionaries, even in temporal things ... he would have supported Missionary Societies heartily, had he had confidence in the missionaries.⁷³

Others shared the same suspicion of missionary societies,⁷⁴ or even

72. Hawker said that he supported missionary societies (cf. Works, vol.II, pp.227-259), and the same is said of Stevens, Palmer and Wells (Oliver, 'Survey', p.16; Stevens, Memoirs, pp.88-91; Palmer, Plain Statement, p.6). The Surrey Tabernacle and Hazelton supported the newly formed Strict Baptist Mission (renamed the Grace Baptist Mission in 1982), which originated as something of a rival to the Baptist Missionary Society formed by Fuller and Carey (Surrey Tabernacle Witness, vol. 16, pp.158-164; Hazelton, Sermons, vol.IV, p.93). Lock states that the Grove Chapel has always supported foreign missions (History of Grove Chapel). Cf. Tryon, Memento, pp.59-60.

73. Memoir of Gadsby, pp.122-123. Gadsby decried the first missionary society meeting in London (Works, vol.I, pp.50-51), and opposed the societies mainly because they were usually Arminian in doctrine, or Low Calvinism at best. Pink: "many of those sent out to 'the foreign field' were rank Arminians, preaching 'another gospel'" (Godhead, p.201). Pittman, like Gadsby, castigated money-minded Arminian missions (Questions, p.85). See Depoyster referred to above.

74. Bradbury: "All the missionary societies have set up the accursed idol, 'Free Will to Do Good'; and wherever you go, you may hear its bold defiance of Jehovah's sovereignty" (Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.II, p.560). On Pink and Philpot, see Murray, Life of Pink, p.59; Oliver, 'Survey', p.16.

of opposition to missions in general.⁷⁵ Some felt that there was no need for these societies because the work of evangelism to every creature can (or should) be carried on by the churches themselves.⁷⁶ Philpot opposed the societies because they united more orthodox with less orthodox and even heretical churches.⁷⁷ Deep down, however, there has been the rejection of the idea that Christians can actually evangelize the entire world. Why, the very idea was ludicrous!⁷⁸

Neither the Reformers nor the Puritans were specially noted for the involvement in foreign missions, but this does not at all mean that they were non-missionary in outlook or practice. Calvin authorised several to carry the Gospel to faraway lands,⁷⁹ and the Puritans also endorsed several missionary endeavours (witness Baxter's correspondence with John Eliot).⁸⁰ In the eighteenth century, the Great Awakening in America was keyed to the Evangelical Awakening in Britain on the one hand and definite missionary enterprises (notably Brainerd and Edward's work with the Indians, not to mention the work of the Moravians, though they were Arminian by and large).

The question of revival necessarily presents itself at this point in our study. The idea of world-wide revival ushering in a great host of converts in the last times has been accepted by many Calvinists of all ages, and recently Iain Murray has put forth the proposition that the Great Missionary Movement received a major impetus - if not the primary incentive of all - from a rediscovery of the Reformed doctrine of Post-Millennialism.⁸¹ Accordingly, when High Calvinism united with Post-Millennialism in the persons of those such as Fuller, the Missionary

75. E.g., Pittman, Biographical History, pp.363-364, 371-378; Hassell, History, pp.313-356, etc. Primitive Baptists such as these have usually made no secret of their opposition to foreign missions.

76. E.g., Styles, Guide, p.232.

77. Cf. Philpot, Sermons, vol.VI, p.103. It is strange that Hyper-Calvinists could chide the missionary societies for uniting churches when the very existence of such groups as the Gospel Standard Baptists have united churches in the cause of denying the universal free offer.

78. So Colyer, Good News, p.72; Philpot, Sermons, vol.VI, p.103.

79. See P.E. Hughes, 'John Calvin: Director of Missions', in Bratt, The Heritage of John Calvin, pp.40-54.

80. In addition to the various histories of missions (especially Latourette), see the recent work by S.H. Rooy, The Theology of Missions in the Puritan Tradition.

81. The Puritan Hope. See our discussion in Chapter III.

Movement was born. Is this a correct evaluation of the situation as it was? While there are some salient points which commend its consideration, we believe that it ignores several points.

Firstly, it overlooks the fact that none of the leaders of the Movement were as high as Murray evidently feels they were. It is granted that Fuller, Carey, Rippon, and the junior Ryland were neither Hyper-Calvinists nor Low Calvinists, but they certainly were more moderate in their Calvinism than those in the tradition of mainstream High Calvinism (e.g., Owen, Sibbes, Flavel, or even Boston). Secondly, it overlooks the fact that many involved in the Movement were Low Calvinists and even Arminians. Thirdly, while it may be granted that some of the initial leaders may have been Post-Millennial, it would be naive to suppose that all the others were of the same eschatological persuasion, much less that this view formed a unifying factor or major incentive. Moreover, how does one explain the fact that more than a few Hyper-Calvinists themselves (such as Dr. Gill) were Post-Millennial? Fourthly, it appears to us that this analysis overlooks the incentives that the leaders themselves specified, namely the earnest desire for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. And finally, it does not do adequate justice to the historical setting - that all of the leaders were involved in opposing and being opposed by Hyper-Calvinism.

John Gill was one of many who accepted that there will be a great revival late in the Christian era.⁸² Rather than being spurred on to help to bring this in, it more appears that he and those who shared his convictions seemed intent on sitting back and letting it come in God's own time. Observe that those such as Gill often say that God will save men "in His own time", "in due time", etc. - phrases which certainly parallel the famous rebuke issued by J.C. Ryland, Sr., against the Missionary Movement in the first place.⁸³ Elaborating this same position, which in fact differs only marginally from the extremist Primitive Baptist sentiments, Homer Hoeksema gives his opinion:

All nations must be evangelized, and they will also be evangelized. But they will be evangelized in God's time and

82. Comm on Psa. 67:6. See especially, The Strange and Wonderful Predictions of Mr. Christopher Love ... Dr. Gill and Robert Fleming, pp.32-40. See Chapter III above.

83. E.g., Cause, p.21; S & T, vol.I, p.530; Warburton, Gospel, pp.8-9, 48, 140; S.F. Paul, ... Cont'd:

according to His counsel. You may charge that this is fatalistic and passivistic ... (but) this is the only possible ground of comfort and assurance for the church in its mission endeavours. What a horrible thought it is that all the blame for the millions upon millions of heathens who go lost is upon us! That can only mean that we are lost also: their blood is upon us! God will require that blood at our hand!... Surely, it is utter folly to propound such a view. Reformed believers must never allow this sentimental theory to pervade their mission zeal.⁸⁴

Consequently, as we noted earlier, when Hyper-Calvinists see the low state of affairs in their churches and in what they see as the situation in the world at large, they usually confess that this is 'a day of small things'.⁸⁵ Their opponents sometimes charge them with thus putting the blame on God rather than admitting their own lack of missionary zeal.

The idea of missionary zeal is seen as linked with the view that in some way we can hasten revival in any sense, whether personal, churchwise or internationally. Hence, both are rejected as Arminian presumption. One must humbly sit back and wallow in his own unworthiness, waiting for God sovereignty to do everything Himself. Low Calvinists do not take the line of the Arminians who would virtually nullify the sovereignty of God in revival by over-emphasizing the responsibility of Man, but neither do they accept the Hyperist perspective that almost entirely rules out human responsibility in the affair by repeatedly stressing divine sovereignty in such a deterministic fashion.

What do the Hyper-Calvinists feel about the many so-called revivals, or 'awakenings' as it were? They applaud the Reformation and the Puritan Movement, but these were both before the age of Hyperism. The eighteenth century Hypers rejected the Evangelical and Great Awakenings, the Great Missionary Movement, and their successors dismissed the 1859 Awakening,⁸⁶ and other such revivals.⁸⁷ Some, of

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Gospel Truths, p.153. Warburton's words concerning personal conversion also applies to the Hyperist view of missions and revival: "Stop, stop, do not be in a hurry; the Lord will evidence His own work in your heart, and He is not in a hurry" (Gospel, p.9).

84. Voice, p.480.

85. E.g., Pink, Letters, p.76; Popham, Counsel, p.131.

86. For example. Philpot expressed suspicion of this revival (Answers, pp.179-187).

87. Hoeksema, IK, vol.II, p.407.

course, recognize them after the fact,⁸⁸ but this appears to us to be building monuments to those whom their forefathers persecuted. By and large they prefer to ignore them, sometimes even opposing the cry for revival.⁸⁹

Other Hyper-Calvinists take the view that by defending the 'doctrines of grace' (sic) so fervently, thus being the leading caretakers of revealed truth, they will be first in line to receive divine blessing when the great revival comes. More than a few High Calvinists are of this opinion as well. As a matter of historical fact, however, this can hardly be true in the revivals already mentioned. In not a single one was there any Hyper-Calvinist leader or, to our knowledge, participant. One could well come to the conclusion that God passed them by for their coldness and highness. Some would go so far as to suggest that this parallels the way in which the Jewish nation rejected Christ though the apostolic preaching, resulting in the blessing being given to the Gentiles.

There are naturally some notable exceptions to the general apathy among Hyper-Calvinists. In this A.W. Pink is most prominent, if not entirely alone. His comments imply a rebuke of other Hyperists: "The prophet was not idle; he did not wait for needy souls to come to him, but took the initiative and went to them".⁹⁰ This was a view shared by those involved in the Missionary Movement and the revivals mentioned above. This position argues that the field is already ripe for harvest; the day of small things is due to the laziness of the reapers who will not go into the fields. More than that, this view sees the Hyper-Calvinist phenomena as actually hindering those who would go out into the fields.

William Carey once remarked to Andrew Fuller, "I will go down into the mine if you hold the rope". The Hyper-Calvinists attempted to cut that rope. And they sent almost no replacements into the mine.

88. Sawyer's words reveal much: "Yet the eighteenth century revival was not ushered in by dire judgements and it may be a revival may come as sovereignly as that" (p.80).

89. E.g., Wilks, p.64.

90. Elisha, p.98.

F. THE GOSPEL AND THE LAW

Let us take a short look at the views of High Calvinists, Hyper-Calvinists and Antinomians on the use of the Law in evangelism and the relationship between the Law and the Gospel. The differences between the three schools are minute but bear noting. More will be said about the Law in Chapter X.

All three schools agree that "in the Gospel, strictly taken, there is no command",¹ while in a lesser sense one can speak of the Gospel as a law with commands.² This is the Gospel as "the law of faith ... meaning neither the moral nor the ceremonial law".³ The Moral Law, says Gill, does not require any faith in Christ but the Gospel does.⁴ The Moral Law speaks only of man's duty and works but the Gospel speaks of God's promises and grace.⁵ The Law sets the choice of life and death before men but the Gospel presents only life.⁶ "Christ was sent to preach the Gospel, and not the Law"⁷ because no preacher, not even Christ, can win souls "by the terrors of the law but by the charming voice of the Gospel".⁸ Nevertheless, both High and Hyper-Calvinists believe that preachers must preach both Law and Gospel today.⁹ Gill said that the two are the twin edges of the divine sword. The one condemns and the other cuts even deeper, though only the Gospel edge can give justification.¹⁰ Ministers must preach the Law, said Gill, in order to show men their need of a saviour,¹¹ as even High

1. Comm on Acts 17:30. Cf. Comm on Psa. 19:8, John 12:50; Body, p.377.

2. E.g., Comm on Job 36:10, Acts 2:38. So also Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.23.

3. Comm on Psa. 78:1. Cf. Comm on John 12:50; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.38.

4. Comm on Gal. 3:12.

5. Body, p.377; S & T², vol.III, p.58.

6. S & T¹, vol.II, p.144.

7. Comm on Luke 4:19. Compare Popham: "Dear friends, we need a good deal of gospelling, we have plenty of legality" (Sermons, vol.I, p.122). When Gadsby rejects that the Law is to be preached, he seems to be implying that the Law is not to be preached instead of, but rather, in addition to the Gospel. See Works, vol.I, p.233.

8. Comm on Pro. 11:30.

9. Gadsby: "We believe it right to preach both law and gospel in the hearing of all that hear us" (Works, vol.I, p.257). Eaton: "we must preach it to such persons, as killingly as we can" (Honeycombe, p.124). Styles: "We hold that the proclamation of the nature, claims, and penalty of the law is an essential part of the work of those who have to declare the salvation of God to their fellow sinners" (Manual, p.22. Cf. p.21).

10. Comm on Psa. 149:6. Cf. on I Kings 19:12.

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Calvinists admit.¹² This is the first of three uses of the Law for sinners which Gill lists, which are: "to convince of sin ... to restrain from sin ... to condemn and punish for sin".¹³

Thus far all three parties are in more or less agreement. But the differences become apparent at this point in discussing what is known as 'Preparationism'. Unfortunately much of the discussion has been clouded by misunderstanding, misrepresentation, and confusing expressions. None of the three teach that a man can adequately prepare himself for salvation by good works. Only Socinians and Deists taught that. The idea of pre-conversional preparatory works was explicitly rejected by all three schools (e.g., Davis¹⁴). In his typical logic of dichotomies Gill argues as follows:

I know of no works preparatory to conversion. Works are either good or evil; evil works cannot be thought to be preparatory to it; and good works ... spring from a principle of grace implanted in regeneration, and so follow upon it, and are not preparatory to it.¹⁵

The other two schools agree with this analysis. But this was not the debated point. The controversy was over whether conviction and sensibility of sin prepared one for conversion and if so, how? Does sin-sensibility precede or follow regeneration? The Puritan Federalists themselves admitted that some degree of conviction of sin is preparatory.¹⁶ Ames was representative of most of them here: "But so

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11. Body, pp.371, 539, 735, 931; Comm on I Cor. 11:28, Num. 10:2. Cf. Brine, Sin Reigns Not, p.27. Philpot: "the servants of God prepare the way of the people by setting before them their lost condition by nature" (Sermons, vol.IV, p.95). Preaching the Law, therefore, is "a solemn and indispensable preparation of the heart for mercy" (vol.X, p.115).

12. E.g., Kuiper, God-Centered Evangelism.

13. Body, p.371. Cf. Comm on Heb. 2:2.

14. Davis, Truth, pp.49, 90; Rehokosht, p.10.

15. Cause, p.180. Cf. CAE, vol.I, p.214 note. The term 'Preparation' is very controversial. In some quarters it smacked of Arminianism, while in others the rejection of it sounded Antinomian. Gadsby: "You may call it a preparation for believing, or what you please, but whatever construction you put upon it, the word of God abounds with passages of this nature" (Works, vol.I, p.299).

16. Iain Murray, 'Antinomianism', p.40; 'Free Offer and the Marrow', p.10; Miller, New England Mind: From Colony to Province, pp.55-56; Packer, 'Puritan View', pp.19-20; Hulse, Free Offer, p.4; Pettit, The Heart Prepared; Kendall, Calvin and English Calvinism.

that men may be prepared to receive the promises, the application of the law usually precedes in order to uncover sin and lead to ... a sense of guilt..."¹⁷ It is the nature of this sense of guilt, though, that is debated.

The relevance of this sense of guilt is vital to the subject of evangelism. Gill said:

... ministers, in exhorting men to believe in Christ, do not, and cannot consider them as elect or non-elect, but as sinners, standing in the need of Christ, and salvation by him; and that either as sensible, or as insensible of their state and condition; not as insensible of it; for I do not find that any such are exhorted to believe in Christ for salvation; but as sensible of it.¹⁸

Hyper-Calvinists follow Gill here in stressing that the Gospel invites only sensible sinners to Christ. This view has often been cited as the main characteristic of Hyper-Calvinism by some,¹⁹ even though we find High and Low Calvinists, Neonomians and even Calvin limiting the invitation to sensible sinners.²⁰ Is there disagreement, then, over the nature of this sensibility? What are the characteristics of this sensibility?

17. Ames, Marrow, p.158. Similarly Philpot: "Now this view of the glory of God in the law prepares us for a view of his glory in the gospel" (Meditations, vol.III, p.40).

18. Cause, p.164. So more or less the following: S & T¹, vol.I, p.34; vol.II, pp.36, 147; Cause, pp.19-20, 87; Body, p.539; Comm on Acts 2:38, Psa. 45:6, 46:4, 51:6, Matt. 11:28, 25:34, Eph. 1:8, Titus 1:2, Pro. 25:11, II Cor. 5:11, Gen. 41:57, Num. 10:2, Isa. 55:1; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.128, 146, 155, 185-187, 261, 305-307; Philpot, Gospel Pulpit, vol.II, pp.234-236; vol.VII, pp.189-203; vol.X, pp.307, 314; Sermons, vol.VIII, pp.19-37; Popham, Sermons, vol.I, pp.171-181; vol.IV, pp.239-248; Styles, Guide, p.71; Manual, pp.185, 204; Gospel Standard Article XXIV. See Clipsham, p.103; Engelsma, pp.67-70. Popham asked those who heard him preach, "Are you a sensible sinner?" (Sermons, vol.II, p.130). Wayman: "As long as a man trusteth in himself that he is righteous, Christ doth not call that man to believe" (Enquiry, p.159). Gadsby: "I admit that I cannot invite a man in full health and strength to come to the physician and be healed" (Works, vol.I, pp.260-261).

19. Cf. Iain Murray, The Forgotten Spurgeon, p.47; Fuller, Works, pp.316, 323; Hart, Antinomianism Dissected, pp.27ff.; Hulse, Free Offer, p.14; Clipsham, p.103; Kevan, p.90.

20. E.g., Ness, p.52; Bunyan, Works, vol.I, p.408; vol.II, p.684; Whitefield, Works, vol.V, p.315; Williams, Gospel-Truth, p.80. Calvin: "So we see that our Lord Jesus Christ only calls those who are heavy laden and travail" (Sermons on Isaiah, p.96. Cf. Comm on Matt. 11:28). See Toon, PC, p.96; Iain Murray, 'Antinomianism', p.41. Often these writers felt that in the special calling, Christ calls only those who are experiencing conviction of sin, which is different from the Hyperist view that in the revealed will and preaching of the Gospel we are to invite only 'sensible sinners'. Moreover, these persons also explicitly taught the free offer and in the citations above do not specify that these sensible sinners are regenerate.

Two elements are particularly singled out: awareness of guilt and awareness of Christ.²¹ Sensible sinners have a desire after spiritual things and are aware of their inability to obey God.²² They are brought to this sensibility by the Holy Spirit's work through both the Law and the Gospel.²³ All men are guilty but not all are aware of it.²⁴ Those that are aware are of two kinds. Some men are like the devils; they know they are guilty but do not repent.²⁵ These are not sensible of their sins in the strict sense of the term. Properly speaking, sensible sinners are 'awakened' and therefore regenerate. Regeneration opens their eyes to see their sins, resulting in a sense of guilt and a desire after Christ.²⁶ Those who are truly sensible of their sins will be

21. See Comm on Isa. 27:13, 55:1, Matt. 11:28, I Kings 19:12, Job 16:2, Psalms 142:4; Body, pp.539, 735, 782; Cause, pp.19-20, 31-32, 87; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.128, 261; Sermons, pp.318-321; Hussey, Glory, pp.250-253; Parks, Notes of Sermons, pp.222-226; Bradbury, Grove Chapel Pulpit, vol.I, pp.397-420; Warburton, Gospel, pp.95-107; Pink, Beatitudes, pp.15-22; Comfort, pp.84-89. On the difference between natural, legal and spiritual conviction of sin, see Allen, The Spiritual Magazine, vol.II, pp.325-329. This distinction is vital, for Hypers admit that the unconverted can experience natural and legal but not spiritual conviction. In this sense Gadsby says that conviction precedes conversion: "He first makes sinners sensible of their danger, then he delivers them" (Works, vol.I, pp.86-87). Gadsby gives probably the fullest description of a 'sensible sinner' experiencing spiritual conviction: "poor and needy, burdened, heavy laden, hungry and thirsty, sensibly lost and ruined ... one who feels himself far from righteousness, and at the far end of all his earthly goodness, and in his own views is without God and without hope in the world, who is willing to be saved in God's own way, but fears he is too lost and wretched to be saved" (vol.I, p.261). Gospel Standard Article XIII states that the Holy Spirit uses the Law "showing the sinner how greatly he has broken that law, and feelingly condemning him for the same..." H.A. Long: "Sorrow for sin is a form of love of Him we have grieved" (Calvinism, p.183. Cf. p.125).

22. Body, pp.539, 735.

23. Cause, pp.19-20, 31-32, 87, 108; Comm on Lev. 13:9, 23:24. This is what is commonly called a 'Law-work' or 'Law-work upon the conscience', not to be confused by any means with 'a work of the Law' (Kershaw, Autobiography, pp.132, 157; Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.71; Sermons, p.274; Warburton, Gospel, p.60; Philpot, Sermons, vol.V, p.11). Sawyer says that this 'Law-work' "prepares the way for the receiving of the doctrine of Christ" (p.140); while Popham held that it always precedes justification (Sermons, vol.II, p.21).

24. Comm on Isa. 27:13.

25. Cf. Comm on Isa. 27:13, Matt. 25:8, Ex. 10:16; Cause, pp.31-32, 108, 179.

26. See Body, pp.539, 782; Cause, pp.19-20, 87; Song, p.18; Comm on Luke, 18:13, Song, 7:9, Pro. 27:7, Lev. 23:24; Styles, Guide, p.71. The first effect of regeneration is conviction or sensibility of sin (H.A. Long, Calvinism, pp.125, 173-174; Gospel Standard Article X); therefore a sensible sinner is already regenerate even though he does not have faith, for in this sense neither faith nor assurance have blossomed (Gadsby, Works, vol.I, p.296). Hence, conviction is of more immediate essence to conversion than is either faith or assurance. Warburton: "Some people are afraid to preach that the poor hungry soul is a child of God. They say he has no business to be set down as one of God's children until he comes to the full assurance of faith that Christ has died for him; and I have been told sometimes that I make people content, and satisfy them in their hungerings" (Gospel, p.102. Cf. Gadsby, Works, vol.I, pp.307-309). Gadsby explained the dilemmas as such: "if there is a soul here feelingly and experimentally in the case of the poor publican, you are at the door of God's mercy. You are as sure of it as if you had it" (vol.II, p.294. Cf. p.304). This sureness is because God never opens a person's heart ... Cont'd:...

brought to a desire of Christ to receive the blessings of salvation.²⁷ They are not comforted by the Law. Only the Gospel satisfies them. Neither Law nor Nature gives them assurance, but the Gospel can.²⁸

Some critics have felt that Hyper-Calvinist preachers look for certain outward marks of the sensibility (and therefore of regeneration) before inviting them to Christ.²⁹ There is a little truth in this but it is not entirely correct. Gill admits that no man can see into men's hearts or know whether another is regenerate or not. Therefore, says Gill, we must preach to all. But we must also preach the need for sensibility of sin.³⁰ Hussey, however, seems to have taught that one can see the Spirit's work and on this basis one can exhort to spiritual acts.³¹ This is not representative of all Hyper-Calvinists. Gill was a more moderate Hyper-Calvinist here as on most points, Hussey was usually more extreme, and most of the others were somewhere in between. But almost all of them taught that all men are to examine themselves to see if they are truly sensible of their sins.³²

Now all these schools held that insensible sinners will not come to Christ as they are.³³ Spurgeon summed up the common position of both: "Conviction may be without conversion, but there is no conversion without conviction".³⁴ However, we find disagreement on the extent of this conviction before conversion. Some taught that much conviction must

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to see the filth of his sin except in order to save him from it. God always completes what He begins. Hence, Paul was regenerate before he expressed faith when visited by Ananias. So also the Ethiopian Eunuch before he spoke with Phillip, the Philippian jailor before Paul explained the way of salvation (vol.I, pp.299-301. Cf. vol.II, pp.206-207, 265), Cornelius before Peter came to preach to him (Gill, Comm on Acts 10), and in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Pilgrim as soon as he felt the burden upon his back as he left the City of Destruction and before he met Evangelist or came to the foot of the Cross (cf. Kershaw, Autobiography, p.157). See Fuller, Works, p.316.

27. Comm on Pro. 14:10, Isa. 27:13, Lev. 13:9; Cause, p.145; Body, p.735.

28. Comm on Job 16:2; Preface to Comm, vol.I, p.ii.

29. This is similar to Engelsma's error noted in note 10 of Section D above. Cf. Keach, Display, pp.166-167.

30. Comm on Eccl. 9:1. Cf. Hulse, Free Offer, p.4.

31. Operations, p.438.

32. E.g., Comm on I Cor. 11:28.

33. Cf. Comm on Lev. 13:9.

34. Proverbs, vol.I, p.114.

precede conversion, while others felt that almost no conviction preceded conversion. Antinomians particularly stressed that true conviction follows and not precedes conversion. But how does God invite them? High Calvinists regularly assert that the invitation is for 'sinners as sinners'.³⁵ Moreover, as John Murray explains, "We entrust ourselves to him not because we believe we have been saved but as lost sinners in order that we may be saved".³⁶ This places sensibility of sin before sensibility of Christ, and thus he is in agreement with the Hyper-Calvinists. Yet Murray still holds that the invitation is for sinners as sinners, not for sinners as sensible sinners. There is considerable overlap and confusion here and the two positions are not as clearly differentiated as some would make out. For example, Bunyan said that "the gospel is to be tendered to all in general ... to sinners as sinners" but he also gave the invitation to "Come sensible of thy sins ... for thus thou art bid to come".³⁷ And on the other extreme Antinomians like Saltmarsh, Davis and even Crisp all explicitly affirmed that Christ is offered to, and belongs to, 'sinners as sinners'.³⁸

What may be debated is whether God is pleased with sinners as unrepentant or as repentant sinners. This has parallels with the Supralapsarian question. Sublapsarians say that God chose the elect as sinners, while the Supralapsarians teach that God chose men from the pure mass, which purity is reflected in the historical application by regeneration and sensibility. But as we observed above, the interpretation of Supralapsarianism given by Gill and others (e.g., Twisse) is that the two positions are complementary, not contradictory. The same may well be true with the invitation question. The High Calvinists, who are almost always Sublapsarians, stress the aspect of man's sin; the Hyper-Calvinists, who are always Supralapsarians, stress the repentance. This is not to say that either entirely rejected the

35. See Packer, Introduction to Owen, p.18; Fuller, Works, pp.316, 323; Iain Murray, The Forgotten Spurgeon, p.47; Boston, Gospel Truth, p.486; Clipsham, p.103. A few Hyper-Calvinists have hedged some on this point, asserting that the Gospel is preached to 'sinners as sinners' (e.g., Pink, Reconciliation, p.133; Hawker, Works, vol.IV, p.131); but this generally has to do with preaching, not invitations.

36. Murray, Redemption Accomplished and Applied, pp.136-137.

37. Works, vol.II, p.349, 684.

38. Saltmarsh, Free Grace, pp.102, 104-105, 191-192; Davis, Truth, pp.16, 49; Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.114. See Kevan, pp.43, 90; Toon, HC, p.63.

views of the other. The two positions are virtually the same. The difference lies in the emphases.

Hyper-Calvinists do not deny that God forgives men as sinners. Their logic would be dichotomistic: God forgives men either as righteous or as sinners; surely not as righteous else they would not need forgiveness; therefore they are forgiven as sinners. Nor do High Calvinists deny that there is a greater conviction of sin after conversion than before. But they often think that the Hyper-Calvinist is in agreement with what they felt was the Antinomian error - that no conviction precedes conversion.

The Antinomian position at first appears to teach just that. Crisp taught that the first thing that a regenerate man does is see himself as a guilty sinner, then sees his need of Christ. The Law does not make men see their wickedness; only the enlightening of special grace can do that.³⁹ On the other hand, says Crisp, "the soul is first satisfied with forgiveness of sins, before there is that real kindly mourning in those that are believers".⁴⁰ This may appear to be a contradiction but Crisp explains the difficulty:

... a broken heart is to be considered in a double sense, either, first, Simply for a heart undone; or, secondly, For one sensible of its own undoing ... It is most certainly true in the first sense, there is a broken heart, before Christ is considered as present to bind it up; that is, men are really undone, before he comes to restore them; but these persons are not sensible of their own brokenness of heart, until Christ comes and makes them sensible of it ... Christ is actually given, and is come unto the soul, before sensibleness be wrought in the soul.⁴¹

39. Crisp, CAE, vol.I, p.25. Gadsby differed with Crisp on this point to some extent. He felt that it is the Law and not the Gospel which brings conviction of sin. To say otherwise would be authentic Antinomianism. See Works, vol.I, pp.296-297. This might appear to be a serious difference between the doctrinal Antinomians of the 1640's and the Gospel Standard Antinomians of the nineteenth century were it not for the fact that the latter often praise the former, and that much of the apparent difference has to do with complementary aspects of the dichotomy of legal and spiritual conviction.

40. CAE, vol.I, p.56. Cf. Miller, New England Mind: Colony to Province, pp.57-58; Iain Murray, 'Antinomianism', p.41. This is what we refer to as 'Crisp's Incentive', the incentive of illuminating inwrought grace.

41. CAE, vol.I, pp.109-110. Philpot: "true repentance for sin, that godly sorrow, that holy mourning which flows from the Spirit's gracious operations ... does not spring from a sense of the wrath of God in a broken law, but of his mercy in a blessed gospel; from a view by faith of the sufferings of Christ ... (and) from a manifestation of pardoning love" (Meditations, vol. II, p.72). See Chapter IX, Section C. This is the motif of Zech. 12:10, referred to in Chapter VII, Section B, Chapter IX, and elsewhere.

According to Crisp, there is indeed a broken heart before one's coming to Christ but this is not true sorrow for sin. It is but a worldly sorrow, heartache, despair. But then Christ is given. A convert first sees Christ (special faith) and in the light of that sight mourns for sin and turns (repentance). Sin is seen as sin only in the light of divine forgiveness. No sinner ever looks at his sins until his eyes are opened. Moreover, no sinner dares look at his sins before conversion, for he knows that looking at them will only bring the pangs of condemnation and echoes of Hell. So the unconverted sinner feels only despair. "As long as men think that their sins are upon themselves, they cannot be at rest".⁴² Saltmarsh and Davis took the same line. Davis said that "Sinners must come to Christ and be united to him in all their sin and filth".⁴³ He said this against the idea of preparatory works, such as those of repentance. Crisp and Saltmarsh were opposed by the Westminster divines (especially Rutherford and Gataker, but they were defended by Twisse) on the same grounds that Davis was opposed by Daniel Williams and, to a lesser extent, Isaac Chauncey. The charge in both controversies was that they minimized, if not eliminated, the use of the Law in convicting men of sin before their conversions.⁴⁴

But was there ever any real difference between the High Calvinists and Antinomians? We do not think so. We feel that they both taught virtually the same thing. The former taught that the Law is to be preached because it is good and holy and the revealed will of God and brings men to a degree of conviction; yet they did not deny that grace brings a greater awareness of sins. The latter stressed that the Law only condemns and does not give faith; yet they did not deny that the preacher can use the Law to some extent in speaking to sinners. The Hyper-Calvinists were situated between the two. At times they agree with the one, at times with the other. And in some minor points, the other two agreed with each other against the Hyper-Calvinists. It is a most unusual triangle that they form.

All three usually accepted the following order in conversion: regeneration, faith, repentance, and later good works. Gill said that good works must follow regeneration, therefore there is no such thing as

42. CAE, vol.II, p.47.

43. Davis, Truth, p.49; Rehokosht, p.10.

44. Cf. Toon, HC, p.63.

preparatory works.⁴⁵ Furthermore, "There must be life before hearing; men must be made alive before they can come to Christ spiritually ... or savingly believe".⁴⁶ Crisp was even bolder: "you must consider Christ as freely given unto you by the Father, even before you can believe".⁴⁷ There is, of course, no interval in time between regeneration, faith and repentance. Faith, however, is not necessarily conscious of itself; that is assurance. A person may believe without knowing he believes. In the gift of faith a man is entirely passive; later he may have the reflex of assurance. Crisp, as we saw earlier, denied this and said that assurance is always where faith is; there can be no separation in time. As to the passivity of man in receiving the gift, Crisp and Gill agree. (This may have some parallels with the more modern Neo-Orthodox views of God as subject rather than as object). And there is no middle stage between unregeneracy and regeneracy, between condemnation and justification in foro conscientiae. There is no time lapse.⁴⁸ Some critics accuse some Hypers of teaching that the stage of sensibility of sin is a middle stage, but this is not entirely correct. However, they all agree that a regenerated person still has remnants of his old sinful nature in him.

The place of repentance in this order is crucial. Some contend that the Hyper-Calvinist places repentance before faith because he teaches that only sensible sinners will believe. Gill himself appears to contradict himself here. In some places he says that repentance is a duty of the Law, in other places that it is of the Gospel.⁴⁹ Faith, which is not of the Law in a saving sense, precedes and produces repentance. The grace of the Gospel produces that which fulfils the demands of the Law. But few of the three schools explicitly taught that repentance precedes faith, which is what a number of Arminians taught. Some did, however, accept that legal repentance precedes spiritual faith, which in turn precedes spiritual repentance.

One may ask if the Hyper-Calvinists concentrated their preaching on the poorer, down-trodden sections of society. Would not these be more

45. Cause, p.180.

46. Comm on Isa. 55:3. Cf. Custance, The Sovereignty of Grace, p.289.

47. CAE, vol.I, p.116.

48. Cause, p.180.

49. Cf. Comm on Luke 5:32, 24:47; Body, p.376.

responsive to the Gospel? Have they not already been brought to despair in themselves? Surely eighteenth century England had many who were sorely oppressed by poverty, alcoholism, etc. Then there were those in the Industrial Revolution. Yet we do not find the Hyper-Calvinists doing much to evangelize them. It will be remembered that the majority of Hyper-Calvinists of that day were Baptists, who themselves were oppressed and persecuted in days past. With the exception of a few Independents, the Puritans had no sympathy with them. For example, Cromwell had a number of Baptist supporters. Up till and including the eighteenth century the Baptists were considered a suspicious cult, a strange sect like the Ranters and Quakers. This was most pronounced in the years immediately after the Restoration (witness Bunyan's imprisonments). The Act of Toleration made things easier but even so the Baptists were always on the fringe of English society. Mainstream society, both religious and secular, viewed them with suspicion as being exclusive and esoteric. Partly as a result they tended to mingle only with themselves, which only aided the opinion others had of them. But unlike the Salvation Army or other persecuted groups a hundred years later, they did not retaliate with zealous evangelism. The very opposite was the case.

It will be remembered that the Evangelical Awakening found widespread acceptance with the lower classes. But the Hyper-Calvinists viewed that movement with condescending disdain. Furthermore, Gill would have reasoned that the poor of this world are not always poor in spirit. Rather than presuming that they are, it is seen as better to let God alone work in their lives. God will graciously awaken a sense of their need in themselves and bring them to the church meetings. No sinner is to be refused the Gospel if he comes and asks.⁵⁰ The attitude, then, was this: seek not, prohibit not.

Closely associated with the offer question is what has been termed the 'warrant to believe'. Why should men believe the Gospel? Four 'Warrants to Believe' were listed in the Practical Use of Saving Knowledge, an important Puritan Document. The first is "God's hearty invitation", sometimes called the well-meant Gospel offer. This speaks of hypothetical cases, not of intention. God would be pleased with a sinner if that sinner believed. God virtually (revealed will) but not actually

50. Comm on Luke 15:2.

(secret will) wills all men to believe. The second warrant is much the same: "the earnest request that God maketh to us to be reconciled to him in Christ". These requests, however, are not on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. God is not indifferent. The request is a command. The third warrant is also a command: "the strait and awful command of God, charging all the hearers of the Gospel to approach in the order set down by him, and to believe in him". The fourth is based on this command: "much assurance of life (is) given, in case men shall obey the command of believing, and a fearful certification of destruction, in case they obey not".

It should be apparent to all that there is really only one actual warrant in High Calvinism. That is God's command. And this is admitted by not a few High Calvinists.⁵¹ Some go a bit further and say that within this warrant is the offer of grace.⁵² But they strongly deny that men should believe because God loves them or because they sense that God loves them. Low Calvinists and Arminians often said that there are two warrants: the command and grace. The terrors of the Law and the wooing of the Gospel bring a man to believe. But High Calvinism taught that there is but one. Related to this is the atonement question, for the atonement is the fullest display of God's grace. Low Calvinists and Arminians assert that a universal atonement is necessary both to preach and to believe.⁵³ The atonement is part of the warrant. But both High and Hyper-Calvinists stringently deny this. They affirm that no man needs to believe that Christ died for him or that God loves him. These persuasions are irrelevant to initial faith. A man believes because God gives him the gift of faith, which gift is given through the command to believe. He does not believe as a direct result of a comprehension that God loves him or that Christ died for him. That comprehension is assurance, not faith.

High Calvinists contend that the Hyper-Calvinists taught that the warrant to believe is the internal and subjective feeling of sensibility of sin. Some also add the knowledge that one is elect.⁵⁴ This subjective

51. E.g., Cunningham, Historical Theology, vol.II, pp.347-348.

52. E.g., John Murray, Redemption Accomplished and Applied, pp.136-137.

53. Cf. Murray, ibid., Lachman, p.24; Douty, The Death of Christ, etc. See Chapter IX, especially Section C.

54. E.g., Harrison, p.16; Coppedge, pp.12-13; Packer, 'Puritan View', pp.19-20; Iain Murray,
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feeling is often called the 'divine principle'. But is this a correct evaluation? We grant that there have been examples of this in Hyper-Calvinist history. Spurgeon said that he remembered being warned when a youth, "You must not come to Christ, for you do not know whether you are one of the elect; and you must not come until you do".⁵⁵ This was not representative of the teaching of all Hyper-Calvinist writers, though there are similarities in Hussey. For example, he said:

I dare not say, it is the unchanged person's immediate duty to come to Christ. He must be renewed first influentially through Christ, out of his mystical renewings in Christ that have been already ... Otherwise to talk of immediate, open obligation to believe ... is to plead for a profane coming to Christ with the filth of sin, and not for a gracious coming to him with the filth thereof.⁵⁶

Brine approached this as well: "until a man through the law is dead to the law ... he hath no warrant to receive Christ as Saviour, or hope for salvation through him".⁵⁷ Even so, Hussey and Brine held that faith precedes repentance. This 'divine principle' is not repentance. They are merely saying that to come to Christ without faith is to come with sin. One must come in faith, which results in cleansing from sin. He does not make himself dead to the law; that death and new life is given freely by the Spirit. A person should wait until he be regenerated before he comes to Christ. To say otherwise is to place faith before regeneration.

In the Hyper-Calvinist scheme faith has two aspects: the passive and the active. A person is passive in receiving the gift of faith. He does not receive it because he asks for it. Yet when it is given he automatically believes, which is the active stage. So too with mourning. A man mourns before he is converted and then truly mourns afterwards. Immediately after the gift of faith is given one mourns for sin, but this is not repentance.⁵⁸ The orthodox order then is: despair (worldly

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'Free Offer and the Marrow', pp.8, 10; The Forgotten Spurgeon, p.47; John Murray, Redemption Accomplished and Applied, pp.136-137; Clipsham, p.103.

55. Quoted in Thornton, p.20.

56. Glory, p.435.

57. Motives to Love and Unity, pp.38-39.

58. Packer: "All the Puritans agreed that the way by which God brings sinners to faith is through ... Cont'd:

sorrow), regeneration and gift of faith, awareness of sin, sight of Christ, active faith in Christ, mourning for sin which produces repentance. Hyper-Calvinists are more apt to call upon a sinner to mourn for sin than to believe, but more apt still to call on him to wait humbly for the gift of faith. They stressed that faith was a gift more than did even the High Calvinists. Consequently they encouraged men to place themselves in an environment where God is more likely to bestow the gift of faith.⁵⁹ To some this is the very essence of preparationism.

Because of the finer points of this way of viewing the historical ordo salutis, a fair amount of confusion and disagreement has arisen concerning the true Hyperist position. If critics vary in their analysis here, part of the reason is that the Hyper-Calvinists themselves have expressed varying opinion, though in the main they have taught the position as outlined above. Much of the problem involves the difference between natural and spiritual conviction, for this distinction forms the basis for the division of legal and evangelical repentance. The question is this: how is one to know if he is really experiencing spiritual conviction? Certainly the Gospel does not specify individual names. Only those who can discern that they are undergoing spiritual conviction have the full warrant to believe in a saving as opposed to a merely natural or historical manner. Styles makes this position quite plain: "The warrant of Faith we have stated to be an inwrought persuasion that the portions of the Gospel message which direct, invite, or command believing acts, refer to such persons as we know ourselves to be".⁶⁰ Sinners, therefore should wait for a manifestation to be given to them. They must remain humbly passive, not become presumptuously active.⁶¹ What sort of manifestation can be expected? When it comes, it can be discerned through the feelings, as Popham affirms: "Now to feel we are

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a 'preparatory work', longer or shorter, of contrition and humbling for sin. This is not repentance (actual turning from sin, which follows faith), but the soil out of which, upon believing, repentance will spring. The reason why they held this preparatory work to be necessary has nothing to do with the question of the warrant of faith" ('Puritan View', pp.19-20). Note how Packer refers to the actual-virtual scheme. Philpot said that one can have a kind of repentance without godly sorrow (Sermons, vol.V, p.6).

59. W. Walker, 'Jonathan Edwards', in Jonathan Edwards: A Profile, pp.95-96. Cf. Bogue, Edwards, pp.78-79.

60. Manual, p.251.

61. See Gadsby, Works, vol.II, p.93; and Chapter VII, Section B above.

sinners is to be prepared to hear of, seek after, and find Him".⁶²

It should come as no surprise, then, that this process involves no small amount of introspection. In a recent article, Robert Sheehan has perceptively pointed out that this introspection is not to be confused with the inward looking of a Christian who desires to grow in grace, conscious that he has an advocate before his Father in heaven. Rather, it is the morbid, if not selfish, looking inward in order to discern whether he is even regenerated at all and can say that God is his father, with the aim of using the evidence of this search as a warrant to believe savingly in the Mediator. Furthermore,

Whereas most 'isms' direct men to look at their works for their hope of salvation, Hyper-Calvinism calls for men to look at God's work in them for their grounds of believing they have salvation. Hyper-Calvinism, therefore, directs men away from looking to Christ and requires them to look first within. It causes men to ask whether they are thirsty enough, hungry enough, willing enough, to be saved and develops a doctrine of discovery whether one is made worthy enough to believe.⁶³

It might be asked if the Hyper-Calvinists are not merely talking about the call to discipleship. After all, does not the Lord Jesus command those who are considering following Him to count the cost - and does this not at least partly involve introspection? We grant that there would be some truth in this analysis if evidence could be given that the Hyperists themselves put it in those terms, whereas we are not ourselves familiar with any instances in which any of them have.

The difficulty rather seems to be related to the dichotomy of legal and spiritual repentance,⁶⁴ though some notable Hyper-Calvinists have not accepted this division.⁶⁵ An unregenerate person can experience

62. Counsel, p.20.

63. 'Critique', p.46. Spurgeon: "Brethren, this is rank Popery! It is contrary to that gospel you so love ... The fact is, it is sheer legality; it is making a part Christ out of your sense of need", and bases faith on one's feelings rather than on Christ (Anecdotes, pp.104-105, 146, 159-160).

64. Cf. Irons, Jazer, pp.98, 102; Kershaw, Grace Alone, pp.160-162 (where he approvingly quotes Gill's explanation of Acts 17:34 in terms of this dichotomy rather than in terms of Duty-repentance).

65. Engelsma says that it is "artificial and impossible" to make the distinction between 'evangelical repentance' and 'saving faith' on the one side and 'legal repentance' and 'common faith' on the other (pp.11-12). This is not to say that the school of Hoeksema is not Hyper-
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natural conviction resulting in legal repentance, but he does not have the duty to exercise spiritual (evangelical) repentance until he experiences, and senses that he experiences, spiritual conviction. This is directly related to the matter of Duty-Faith. Just as only sensible sinners have the duty to believe savingly, so only the same have the duty to repent spiritually.

It is also related to the question of the free offer, for the content and call of the Gospel must match the faith and repentance required and vice-versa. In contrast to the Antinomians of the 1640's, who emphasized the preaching of the Gospel primarily over the Law, the Hyper-Calvinists have tended to follow the emphasis of the Federalist Puritans that the preaching of the Law in some way must precede the preaching of the Gospel, while Low Calvinists either say that the two must be preached co-ordinately and equally rather than sub-ordinating the Gospel to the Law or the Law to the Gospel.

In our opinion, this parallels the way in which these schools view the being and attributes of God. The Antinomians tend to stress the attribute of love over holiness, with the result that their preaching stressed the Gospel and grace more than the Law and holiness. High Calvinists generally see holiness as greater than love in the divine essence, resulting in a ministry in which the Law takes a certain precedence over the Gospel. The Low Calvinists prefer to see love and holiness as complementary equals in God; hence, Gospel and Law must be preached equally and co-ordinately. Hypers see sovereignty as even higher than holiness and love; hence, no offers.

It would appear repetitive if not simplistic for us to assess this state of affairs merely in terms of the relative emphases of the various schools under investigation if it were not for the fact that the evidence itself indicates this conclusion. Few would challenge our comments

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Calvinist, as Engelsma contends. Even Hoeksema had to admit that according to II Cor. 7:10 there is a kind of repentance that leads to death and another which leads to life; one is worldly, the other is godly; one was exemplified in Judas, the other in Peter. Moreover Hoeksema, and we presume Engelsma, accepted the classic Reformed teaching that there is a difference between historical faith and saving faith, the one affecting merely the mind while the other affects mind and heart (will). But Engelsma does not elaborate his point except to attempt to show that neither Hoeksema nor himself are Hyperist in the same way as Hussey, Brine and Gill, particularly as this question relates to the free offer.

regarding the Antinomians in this regard, but much of the controversy surrounding the Low-High-Hyper triad has to do with these very points. All three believe that both Law and Gospel must be preached. But the latter two certainly tend to say that we must preach the Law first and then the Gospel. At times the Hypers stress this so much that it sounds as if they are saying that we must preach the Law so strongly that we have no warrant to preach the Gospel until we notice that our Law-preaching is having the desired effect, namely conviction of sin. Though there is some truth in the actual practice of some Hyperists so far as this exaggeration is concerned, it is at best still an exaggeration of the state of affairs so far as theory is concerned.

As a matter of fact, what the High and Hyper-Calvinists say is that as Sinai preceded Calvary, so our preaching of the Law must precede our preaching the Gospel. The result is that we can first call for legal repentance before natural faith, and indicate that the individual will experience spiritual conviction before spiritual repentance or saving faith. As A.W. Pink was a moderate Hyper-Calvinist who had some affinities with High Calvinism not often shared by other Hypers, his views at this juncture are enlightening. Pink is quite explicit:

the proclamation and enforcing of the Divine Law precedes the publication of the Divine Gospel ... the urgent need (is) of using the plough of the law before they attempt to sow the seed of the Gospel ... Thus the first duty of the evangelist is to call upon all men to repent ... The next great duty of the evangelist is to call on his hearers to 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ' ... That order is unchanging, for it is impossible to believe the Gospel till the heart be contrite ... there is far too much presenting of Christ to sinners today ... and far too little showing sinners their need of Christ ... to present Christ to those who have never been shown their need of him, seems to us to be guilty of casting pearls before swine.⁶⁶

Mainstream High and Hyper-Calvinists would agree with Pink's position. There is a definite precedence of Law before Gospel. This does not, however, mean that the Law has a precedence over the Gospel, nor that holiness necessarily takes precedence over grace. The two schools explain that just as the historical order of the Covenant of Works preceded that of Grace, so our preaching must reflect God's work within

66. The Sermon on the Mount, p.357; The Atonement, pp.287, 299; Godhead, p.164; Sovereignty, p.247; Objections to Sovereignty, p.3.

history. But Pink also teaches that repentance precedes faith.

Definite problems arise when this is viewed in conjunction with the eternal decrees, for history must be gauged and evaluated in terms of eternity. Much of the difficulty of the Hyperist system here arises as a result of its Supralapsarianism. That is, as the Gospel is the historical fulfillment of the Law, so the Law is seen as subordinate in some respects to the Gospel. But that is a conclusion very difficult for either school to accept without definite qualifications. The majority of High Calvinists appeal to the Sublapsarian order of the decrees to explain how Law and Gospel on the one hand, and repentance and faith on the other, are related. Thus, they are seen as subordinate: Law tends to take precedence over Gospel, repentance over faith. This ultimately gets back to the idea of the divine attributes.

But the Hyperists are Supralapsarian and thus would like to make Gospel take the precedence over the Law. That was the position of the Antinomians, who stood in opposition to the Highs (if only in emphasis). The Hyperists borrowed some of the Antinomian perspectives but also relied on the High scheme of Federalism. This is particularly illustrated in the Supralapsarian scheme as taught by Gill. As we saw in Chapter IV, Gill followed Twisse in asserting that the differences between the Supra and the Sub schools are minimal, merely a point of logic. It is that subordinating apex logicus that is seen in the divine attributes on the one hand and the preaching of the Law and Gospel on the other. Hence, when the Supralapsarians assert that election and reprobation were irrespective of sin, the historical order must be the exact opposite (for the historical order of salvation, both as to God's saving acts with His people in general and as to individuals, is the converse of the logical order of the decrees). It is when Calvinists tended to become Supralapsarians that they tended to stress Law before/over Gospel, and repentance before/over faith. This eventually meant that one must arrive at something of a Gospel Standard doctrine on the one hand and the rejection of the free offer and Duty-Faith/Duty-Repentance on the other.

As we said, Pink was something of a bridge between High and Hyper-Calvinism. Consequently, we can see definite indications away from the hardened Hyperist view in those Supralapsarians who were lower than Pink. Take Thomas Goodwin, one highly respected by High and Hyper alike. He was a noted Supralapsarian but, as he had reservations about

the emphasis laid upon the notion of subordination of the decrees to one another (as we saw in Chapter IV), so he did not cross into the distinctive realm of Hyperism. In other words, he believed in a free offer and Duty-Faith. Yet there was still a definite tension in his theology regarding the decrees. He remained a Supralapsarian and thus could stress Law and Gospel in a basically subordinate manner.

This brings us to the *Sublapsarian High Calvinist position. Lower than that of Goodwin's, this position also accepted the subordinate relationship of the decrees but in rejecting Supralapsarianism it had a similar relationship between Law and Gospel on the one hand and repentance and faith on the other. Thus, they sometimes spoke of Law as historically preceding the Gospel, but they accepted the free offer and emphasized that the Law is incomplete without the Gospel. As to the application of this in the individual, they sometimes viewed repentance as preceding faith, but more often they viewed faith as preceding repentance. But though they accepted Duty-Faith and Duty-Repentance, they still could not always accept the doctrine that assurance was of the essence of faith.

Thus we reach the Low Calvinists. They saw the divine attributes in a co-ordinate, not subordinate, relationship to each other. This co-ordination, then, continues into all that follows: the decrees, the historical order of Law and Gospel, and the application in repentance and faith. A few of the higher Lows, such as the Amyraldians, may talk about a logical order of the decrees in such a way that suggests that the atonement decree 'preceded' that of the election decree. In point of fact, though, this is exactly where the aspect of Amyraut's 'Hypothetical Universalism' comes in. Other Low Calvinists see the decrees co-ordinately in such a way that protects universal atonement on the one hand and the attribute of holiness as exhibited in wrath on the other.

This can be seen in two respects. The first has to do with the free offer and Duty-Faith. This variety of Low Calvinism posits that the free offer is grounded on a universal grace and a universal atonement. There is a co-ordinating common grace which affects an aspect of the atonement producing 'Dualism'. Thus, Christ died for all but especially the elect. In practice, this means that Duty-Faith requires men to believe that God loves them and that Christ died for them - which none

of the higher schools could accept. This also means that assurance is of the essence of faith.

The second respect in which this variety of Low Calvinism can be understood is in its relationship with Arminianism and yet another variety of what could broadly be classed as another variety of Low Calvinism, i.e., Neo-Orthodox Calvinism. As to the former, it agrees with the other varieties of higher Calvinism that there is a special grace not given to all men, which Arminianism cannot accept as such. Moreover, it sees the co-ordinating relationship between the divine attributes and, specifically pertinent to our discussion here, the order of faith and repentance differently. If the Supralapsarians and Hyper-Calvinists tended in the direction of placing repentance before faith as a result of subordinating attributes and decrees, so too did the Arminians in the opposite manner. That is to say, they also accepted a subordinate relationship of the attributes (some say love, others holiness, which resulted in the varieties of Arminianism; but this is not within the scope of our present investigation). Consequently, while Arminians accepted Duty-Faith, they usually placed repentance before faith and Law before Gospel.

As for Neo-Orthodox Calvinism, it tends to place the divine attributes in something analogous to a subordinating relationship in which love is greater than holiness, resulting in the supremacy of Gospel over Law, and faith over repentance, in a way not accepted by mainstream Low Calvinism and the higher forms of Calvinism nor by the several kinds of Arminianism. It is not the place of this work to investigate Neo-Orthodox Calvinism as such, but its place in the scheme of things outlined above stands out in one particular way - and that has to do with the whole question of the free offer itself. Although representatives of this school believe in the free offer, they view it differently from the others. As far as we can discern, they are reluctant to express themselves on the negative results of the rejection of the free offer. Their stress on the universality of grace borders on a strict universalism which we do not find in either mainstream High Calvinism or Calvin's Calvinism. Though some of the extremer proponents of this school approach a strict universalism in which all men will be saved, the more conservative spokesmen (especially Barth) do not go quite so far concerning the ultimate destiny of unbelievers. Nevertheless, all other varieties of Calvinism are not satisfied with what they see as an

unclear, if not vacillating, alternative in Neo-Orthodoxy.

This brings us back to the question of the free offer in relation to the warrant to believe and the Law. Even as Neo-Orthodox Calvinism dichotomised Law and Gospel to one extreme,⁶⁷ so Hyperism did so in the opposite. One evaluation of these two extremes is that concerning what is to be preached to believers and what to unbelievers. For instance, certain Neo-Orthodox Calvinists appear to be teaching that we should preach the Gospel to the lost and the Law to the saved. This is seen as the application of the fact that though Sinai preceded Calvary, Sinai itself was preceded by the deliverance from Egypt. Thus, the Law was given to those in a conventional relationship of salvation with Christ. Gospel precedes Law.

The Hyperists, at the other extreme, contend that Law precedes Gospel. The effect in practice is that they tend to preach only Law to unbelievers and only Gospel (as they see it) to believers - this is blatantly portrayed in the Gospel Standard system. The specific application of this perspective is the rejection of Duty-Faith and Duty-Repentance in such a way that seems to place repentance before faith. It charges that Arminianism and Neo-Orthodoxy would do away with the need for repentance. Pink, for example, decried 'Easy Believism' in a manner more pronounced than Low Calvinism.⁶⁸ Of course, the Arminians and Neo-Orthodox Calvinists defend themselves from what they see as a misunderstanding. Some point to Bonhoeffer's rejection of 'cheap grace' that does not take into account the ethical imperatives of the Gospel call to discipleship. And then there's the Wesleyan stress on holiness.

The question of discipleship is raised again in another respect. It might be asked if the Hyperists are carrying discipleship preaching too far? That is to say, though it is necessary to 'weed out' those who are not sincere, is it not fair to speculate that perhaps in weeding out the

67. Some Hyper-Calvinists would like to agree with the words of Barth himself: "God's law, however, is not an offer and one cannot master it even by submitting to it" (Ethics, p.299). The Hyperists would argue that as the Moral Law is not an offer due to divine sovereignty, so the Gospel command to believe (howbeit not savingly per se) is not an offer. This is not what Barth meant. Sheehan sees a similarity between Barthianism and Hyper-Calvinism ('Critique', p.45). See Chapter X, Section F.

68. See The Sermon on the Mount, pp.357-362. Styles: "We stand in pronounced antagonism to the modern system in which Repentance is ignored, and sinners are indiscriminately commanded to believe" (Manual, p.185).

pretenders the Hyper-Calvinists may also be weeding out those whom the Lord Himself is drawing or has already drawn to salvation? If 'Easy Believism' lowers the standard, does not Hyperism raise the standard to an unreachable level? This is the criticism of some opponents. It is suggested by some critics of the Hyper system that Hyper-Calvinists do not call sinners to repentance, but only the regenerate.⁶⁹ They invite only 'sensible sinners' who are already regenerate, and the standard by which one becomes a 'sensible sinner' is primarily the Law and introspection. Thus, an unnecessary fence is placed around the Gospel and the Cross, and an unattainable standard is erected.

We have only briefly hinted at the exact place of the atonement in the questions concerning the free offer and related issues. This is because it is of such importance and detailed scope that to do full justice to it a separate chapter should be employed. We hope to show that one of the greatest arguments against the free offer has been that of the doctrine of limited atonement, and that for the opposite reason the lower Calvinists have defended universal atonement in part to protect the free offer. But this is to get ahead of our discussion.

69. So Sheehan, 'Critique', p.45.